MODERN INDIAN MYSTICISM

A Comparative And Critical Study



Sobharani Basu

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ABOUT THE BOOK

MODERN INDIAN MYSTICISM

IN THREE VOLUMES

Vol. I. Essentials of Indian Mysticism

Vol. II. Mystics of Modern India

Vol. III. A Critique of Indian Mysticism

By

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The three volumes embody the fruits of a modest endeavour of the author to present a panoramic picture of mysticism as practised and pursued during the last one hundred and fifty years in India.

The author, in the course of her philosophical assessment of mysticism, nowhere allows her critical faculties to be overwhelmed by her abiding faith in the validity of mystic experience.

Nineteenth century has been recognised as the period of renaissance of Indian Culture and Religion. These volumes contain an account of the development of mysticism during the nineteenth and early twentieth century.

The first volume deals with the background and essential features of Indian Mysticism. In the second volume, an account of renowned Indian mystics, their teachings and *sādhanā* is given. The third volume is devoted to a critical estimate of the value and validity of mysticism in general with special reference to the mystics of modern India.

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Modern Indian Mysticism

A Comparative and Critical Study

Volume One

Modern Indian Mysticism

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by

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Introduction

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समर्पणम्

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सर्वदर्शनसारेण निर्मितं वपुरुज्ज्वलम् ।
यस्य तं धृतकारुण्यं '**राधाकृष्णं**' गुरुं नुमः ॥ १ ॥

शिवदृष्ट्या जगत् सर्वं यः पश्यति समाहितः ।
जिज्ञासुकल्पवृक्षं तं '**गोपीनाथं**' नमाम्यहम् ॥ २ ॥

कृष्णः स्याद् राधया सह गोप्या नाथोऽथवा भवेत् ।
नाममात्रेण भिन्नौ तौ गुरुत्वेनैक एव मे ॥ ३ ॥

करुणासेकमासाद्य विग्रहद्वयवद्गुरोः ।
ज्ञानबीजं यदुप्तं मे तस्यैतत् फलमुत्तमम् ॥ ४ ॥

तयोः श्रीपादपद्मेषु '**शोभया**' भक्तिनम्रया ।
समर्पितं फलं चैतद् विदुषां मुदमावहेत् ॥ ५ ॥

Dedicated to

Bhāratratna DR. S. RADHAKRISHNAN

and

Mahāmahopādhyāya Pandit

DR. GOPĪNĀTH KAVIRĀJ, Padmavibhūṣaṇa

1. One whose body is resplendent with the essence of philosophies and one who is full of compassion, to such my *guru* '*Radhakrishnan*', I bow.

2. One who blissfully looks at the whole world in meditation and who is like a wish-fulfilling tree to the inquisitive, to such (my *guru*) '*Gopīnāth*' (Kavirāj) I bow.

3. Whether it be Radhakrishnan or Gopīnāth, differing only in names, for me they as *Guru*, are one and the same.

4. The present work is verily the fruit grown out of the seed of knowledge sown into me by them and watered by their compassion.

5. Unto their lotus-feet does '*Śobhā*', with devotion and humility, dedicate this fruit which may delight the learned.

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VOLUME ONE

ESSENTIALS OF INDIAN MYSTICISM



DR. SARVEPALLI RADHAKRISHNAN
b. 1888



राष्ट्रपति भवन, नई दिल्ली-4.
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Srimati Sobharani Basu has been for many years interested in the higher aspects of mysticism, a subject to which she has devoted practically all her time and attention for the last twenty three years. She obtained for her thesis the D.Litt.Degree from the University of Calcutta and I think she is one of the very few students of Comparative Religion who has specialized in this subject. Her knowledge of mystic literature — Indian and Persian — is vast and extensive. Any encouragement given to her will be rewarding. This book in which she has collected her thoughts gives an account of the lives and teachings of some of the mystics of the last one hundred years. The treatment shows great devotion and discernment; and how the mystical love of God engages the whole being of man — knowledge, emotion and will. I hope the book will be widely read by students of philosophy and religion.

S. Radhakrishnan

(S.Radhakrishnan)

INTRODUCTION

The following pages coming from the pen of a gifted lady deal with Indian Mysticism in some of its essential features as illustrated in the lives of the great saints of our land in the present age. The author sees these saints as mystics[1] and studies the mystical career of each in the light of her ideals of mysticism. The saints belong to different religious denominations, but it is well known that they have had in their lives an immediate experience of the Divine Reality behind all appearances.

Who is a mystic ? It is difficult to answer the question. A mystic is not necessarily an occultist, although he may have some occult powers (telepathy, etc.) at his command. A mystic need not be an intellectual prodigy, though he may have all the blessings of the Pure Light. That the suprahuman Light of Knowledge may be revealed to a mystic is not strange to Western mysticism. St. Ignatius is said to have comprehended marvellously a great number of truths pertaining to the faith and to the human sciences. These truths were so numerous and the light was so bright that he felt as if he had entered into a new and glorious world. The intensity, amplitude, and excellence of this heaven-sent knowledge was so great that all that he had earlier learnt in his life of sixty-two years, whether acquired fortuitously or through

1. We are here speaking of what is known as religious mysticism, both of the 'moderate' and of the 'extreme' type.

diligent study, could not be compared to that which he gained at this climactic moment. Similar is the account of St. Francis Xavier. He also said that he had found himself inundated by the Divine Light, when a veil was, as it were, lifted up from the eyes of his Spirit and the truth of the human sciences, even those which he had never studied, became manifest to him through a process of intuition. In India too, in the history of mystic illumination, the acquisition of natural knowledge in a supernatural way is not unknown. The great *yogin* Śivarāmkiṁkara Yogatrayānanda, whom I knew personally and intimately, told me (in 1914) that he had acquired an exact comprehension of the details of the *Mahābhāṣya* of Patañjali in a vision at night lasting for only a very short time. The story is narrated at some length in my book *Sādhudarśana-O-Satprasaṅga* (Vol. II).

A mystic is not a devotee in the conventional sense, though he may have the most fervent ardour of devotion. He is neither an ascetic, though in the earlier stages he may be found using methods of self-mortification. He may be all these or may be none. A mystic need not always be a visionary, though he may have visions from time to time. In all the well-known instances, we come across certain attributes which may be maximally or minimally present in a true mystic, or may even be totally absent, simply because these do not constitute his essential nature.

I have found different people, with dissimilar temperaments and outlooks, inclined to see mysticism in different lights. But all diverse views finally lose their rigidity and agree in implying a sense of vagueness

inherent in the concept of mysticism. This indefinable element in mysticism involves a plunge into the profound depths of Being and Consciousness, leading to a clear intuition of Unity and Love — a state which continues even when the mental-life and the sense-life are resumed. This is comparable to the *śāmbhavī* pose of the *yogin,* in which the senses continue to function, maintaining contact with the so-called external world; but the inner consciousness refuses to take notice of it, and persists in the exclusive enjoyment of the bliss of its own light. More or less in the same way, the mystic seems to move in this world of ours, and yet he lives in Reality — in a world of his own. Absolute peace and tranquillity reign supreme in him. His heart thrills in the delectable experience of self-awareness. It is a state in which the Supreme Union splits itself up into a blessed companionship in which, however, the sense of otherness disappears but the sense of integrity persists, allowing for the free play of a responsive personality, vibrating with every shade of feeling.

True mysticism, as I understand it, implies that the soul is successively awakened (*prabuddha*), and fully awakened (*su-prabuddha*), so that the sense of exclusiveness pertaining to each of the normal human states, viz., waking (*jāgrat*), dream (*svapna*), and deep sleep (*suṣupti*), is supplemented by a state of unbroken self-awareness which presupposes the integration of consciousness (*turīya*). The awakening of the soul involves as its concomitant the disappearance of the sense of alienness of the so-called outer world. This causes the soul to turn inward : first, from the object

to the light which shines upon it; then from the light to the subject, the source of illumination; thirdly, from the subject to the Transcendental Consciousness and Power; and finally from this, back to the Central Being which stands behind all manifestation. This is the usual process. It is assumed that all powers lead back to the Self-Conscious Will (*icchā-śakti*), which when turned outwards controls immediately the entire machinery of the cosmic movement, viz., the movements of *jñāna* and *kriyā*. This represents for the *yogin* a state of mastery or lordship (*aiśvarya*), a state of perfection implying full control of the outgoing forces. This state represents the majesty of the soul, which is now within the Divine Circle and reigns supreme over the outer creation.

The above state leads on to the higher state of absolute resignation to the Divine Will. In other words, the human will at this point unconditionally surrenders to the Divine Will, or in a sense, becomes one with it. In the Tāntrika phraseology, the soul of the *yogin*, now in close embrace with the Divine, enjoys the bliss of union (*ānanda*) and supreme self-realisation (*cit*) — the whole process representing the mystery of Divine Transformation, which is beyond time, space, and the categories of empirical consciousness. The consciousness of this state involves a blessed union of *para-jñāna* and *parā-bhakti*, or *cit* and *ānanda*, which is universally and eternally the twofold heritage of every true mystic. Neither the senses nor the reason of man can aspire to this ineffable condition, which Divine Grace alone can promise and fulfil.

From what has been said about it, it is clear that

the mystic consciousness to an ordinary human being cannot mean much beyond what he can comprehend through his intellect. To some it may vaguely mean nothing more than a state of supranormal consciousness, through which some extraordinary inner powers reveal themselves, ranging from the so-called occult powers to the capacity for having certain exalted visions and similar experiences. The consciousness to which these powers are relevant may undoubtedly be associated with the faith and the quest of a pilgrim, but it is not mystic at all. Mystic consciousness begins with the realisation of the unity behind the diversities of the material world. Higher up, the diversities begin to melt away and the One Undifferentiated Whole refulgently reveals itself. It is a consciousness in which the physical being reveals. It is a consciousness in which the physical being and all other worldly ties cease to have any validity at all. The glorious, self-luminous Unity reveals within Itself both the seeker and the sought in union, and yet each retains its distinct entity. It is a state in which man and God unite themselves in a close embrace and realise their oneness, showing thus that one is truly inseparable from the other. Beyond this is the Transcendent and the All-embracing One. In Christianity, the Three Persons in the Trinity, separate from each other, represent One single Divine Substance.[2] In

2. We may refer in this context to the belief expressed in Indian sacred literature that, at the beginning of creation, One Supreme Consciousness reveals itself at once as Master and as Pupil (called by one name now and by another at another time)

the *Bhāgavata* culture of ancient India, the four *vyūhas* though mutually distinct, represent one single Divine Substance. The relation between Me and Thee is eternally existent in the union, though it is beyond time and above *māyā*. This is a state of true *yoga* in which, as the *Gītā*[3] says, the seeker sees his Beloved in everything : *yo māṁ paśyati sarvatra*; and at the same time, he sees everything in his Beloved : *sarvaṁ ca mayi paśyati*. It is a state of *parā-bhakti*.[4] Beyond this is the Supreme Realisation of what in the *Āgamas* is described as *pūrṇāhaṁtā*, in which the soul of

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for the transmission of Supreme Knowledge (*vidyā*). Abhinavagupta in his short commentary on the *Parā-Triṁśikā* says :

prabudhyamānarūpa yadā praśnaṁ nirbhṛtāvabhāsamāna
paramārtha svarūpaṁ karoti tadā prabuddhāvasthā pratipattau
saiva pūrṇarūpa bhairava devātmanāprativacanadātrī sampadyate.

The implication is that the *parā-saṁvit* represents both the 'Query' and the 'Solution' both in this 'Transcendental Dialogue'. The idea is that 'Query' never arises except in contact with the *parā-saṁvit* and so also the 'Solution'.

3. *Bhagavad-Gītā*, VI. 30.

4. In the *Bhagavad-Gītā* (VII. 16, 17) it is said that of all the categories of *bhakti*, *e.g.*, that of the distressed (*ārta*), the inquisitive (*jijñāsu*), the worldly (*arthārthī*), and the wise (*jñānin*), the last, *i.e.*, of the *jñāni-bhakta*, is the best; for the *jñānin* is not only eternally united (*nitya-yukta*) but also one-pointed (*eka-bhakta*). Elsewhere it is said :

yogināmapi sarveṣāṁ madgatenāntarātmanā .
śraddhāvān bhajate yo māṁ sa me yuktatamo mataḥ ..

Gītā, VI.47.

The highest *yogin*, therefore, is one who is not only a *jñānin* but also a *bhakta*. *Yoga* is thus an intimate union of the Lover and the Beloved.

the seeker, now one with the Divine, realises itself in an infinite variety of modes and ways.

There are different ways of approach to this Supreme Experience and there are infinite shades of differences among the various ways. The Supreme Experience is certainly one and the same and yet there is a characteristic quiddity (*viśeṣa*) in each individual, which has an abiding spiritual value. The Divine Presence may be realised as 'that' (*tat*), as a Living Light permeating all and subsisting beyond all. It may be realised as 'Thee' and 'Me', both inseparable from each other; or It may be realised as 'Me' alone.[5] Thus It reveals itself as Third Person as 'That' (*tat*), or as Second Person as 'Thee' (*tvam*), or as First Person as 'Me' (*aham*). There is an Impersonal Presence also which is at once elusive and really magnificent. In each case, the soul exists in a state of indifference (*udāsīna*), or as the closest companion, or as one's very self. In the Impersonal, however, there is no trace of 'I'—even the Integral 'I' (*pūrṇāham*) is absent there. And yet Awareness persists. It is the same as the *bhāṣā* of the *Śākta Āgamas,* beyond the *anākhyā*. Even here there is a 'Beyond' which cannot be called present, yet which *is* (of which we hear so much in Jewish *Kabāla*). As a matter of fact, even the 'Beyond' or 'Beyond-Beyond' is also within the orbit of the Absolute (*akhaṇḍa*).

The Tantras recognise three stages in the development of the human soul, corresponding to the three

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5. Compare : *ekaivahaṁ jagatyatra dvitīyā kā mamāparā, Durgā-saptaśatī.*

fundamental states (*bhāvas*) of human nature, viz., the animal soul (*paśu*), the heroic soul (*vīra*), and the divine soul (*divya*). The human soul in its early stage of development is called *paśu* and is steeped in animal propensities. The mystics might call it the Purgative state. Impurities abound in this state. The mode of life prescribed for the purpose of removing the impurities is technically known as *paśvācāra,* which is strictly dominated by the laws of morality and self-control. In this state, the laws and regulations guiding a strictly moral life become imperative. The second stage, called *vīra*, arrives when the spiritual energy locked up within the physical frame, is released along with the awakening of *kuṇḍalinī*. In this state there is a wonderful sense of self-awakening, when the *yogin* realises that he has nothing but a spiritual being, bearing no relation as it were to its physical counterpart, which he previously used to regard as his own self. In this condition, he becomes aware of a dual form – a non-physical luminous form, being the substratum of his *bhāva*; and another equally non-physical luminous form, being the object of his *bhāva*. To some mystics, the appearance of these non-physical luminous forms as Lover and Beloved indicates the incipient state of Love, *i.e.,* a state in which Love in its fullest bloom has not yet come into being. Sex-energy is then automatically sublimated and transmuted on account of the fact that the *yogin* rises above the sense of identity with the physical body. In this stage, in some cases, levitation follows. This state is technically known as *ūrdhvaretā*, in which all gravitational pull disappears. This is followed by

the third state known as *divya*, which is really a Divine State and is absolutely Unitive.

The persistence of what, for want of a better word, is called quiddity or individuality (*viśeṣa*) is admitted in each school of Indian thought. It is found in *Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika* as well as in *Sāṁkhya-Yoga*. It is found in the *Upaniṣads* where it is said that unification (*samāpatti*) is followed by the emergence of one's own form (*svarūpāvirbhāva*). Thus we find in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* that the highest light (of the Self) reaches and appears in his own form : *parama jyotir upasampadya svena rūpeṇābhiniṣpadyate.* [6] In the *Brahma-sūtra* [7] we have the same idea.

In the *Siddhānta-Śaiva Āgamas* we find that the animal nature (*paśu-ātmā*), when purged of the basic impurity (*āṇava-mala*) and even of the impurity incidental to a life of power (*adhikāra-mala*), recovers its pristine purity as *Śiva*, free from all defilements. All these liberated *śivas* are equally possessed of the fivefold power (*pañca-kṛtya*)—of creation, etc. —like *Parama-Śiva* Himself. These *śivas* are *one* with *Parama-Śiva* and yet they are not *Parama-Śiva*. It is a wonderful state, inexpressible in human language. The orthodox *Advaitin* in *Vedānta, Trika* of the Kashmir school, or *Mahāyāna Buddhism* lay emphasis on the One, conceived positively or negatively, as if it were an undifferentiated whole (*akhaṇḍa*). But even in the face of this unity, there appears, according to some schools, an inherent state of what looks like differen-

6. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, VIII. 12. 3.
7. *Brahma-sūtra*, IV. 4. 1.

tiation which is, however, not differentiation (*bheda*), in the true sense of the term but only a logical quiddity or particularity (*viśeṣa*).[8]

The ancient *Āgamas* start from a different point of view and proceed along a different line. The so-called *āṇava-upāya* described in the *Āgama* literature is a general name for all physical and psychological devices leading to an animation of the soul. These are resorted to so long as the soul's dynamic power slumbering in inaction is not roused into activity and does not begin to function. Different poses, including different *āsanas, mudrās, bandhas, prāṇāyāma, japa, dhyāna*, and so forth, go to comprise this group. When this dynamic power, the *kuṇḍalinī*, is awakened and the knot of the lower ego is untied, these methods

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8. Even Śaṅkarācārya, the great monist, is said to have maintained this attitude when he said :

satyapi bhedāpagame nātha tavaivāhaṁ na mamākīnastvam.

This implies that, even after the establishment of unity (*bhedāpagame*), there may continue a relationship within this unity, accounting for the experience of 'Thee' and 'Me'. This is not *bheda* but is only particularity, *viśeṣa* (*bhedatābhāvepi bhedakārya nirvāhaka viśeṣaḥ*).

The *advaita* of Jñāneśvara, in his *Advaitānubhava*, also mentions this difference. We find the same view is clearly enunciated in *Tripurā-rahasya* (*Jñāna-khaṇḍa*). There is no doubt that even in the latter, there is a 'Beyond' about which nothing can be said or thought. This appears to be the *Parama-pada* of the *Gītā* (*viśate tadanantaram*). It may be equated with the *Parama-Śiva* or *Parā-saṁvit* of the *Śaiva* and *Śākta Tantras* respectively. Yet a great *siddha* like Svatantrānanda and others seem inclined to go beyond this, and place the *Para-vyoman* even beyond *Parama-Śiva*. We are reminded, in this context, of the 'Abyss' of Jacob Boehme and of 'Beyond-Beyond' God of Meher Bābā's philosophy.

which are basically crude are no longer necessary. The power, now active, begins to function in all its dynamism, destroying the cobwebs of vague notions, fancy, and imaginations (*vikalpas*), in its ascent through the vital and psychic centres. The upward surge of the power, now free, shoots through the vast fields of mundane existence. These fields, under its impact, are progressively more and more purified from the distractions incidental to the lower atmosphere until the gushing surge reaches the illimitable ocean of Universal Consciousness. This is, in brief, the *śākta* way. The aspirant, under the influence of the divine grace, finds his way smooth, and does not have to make any special effort to ascend from a lower plane to a higher plane. What he is required to do is to merely stick to his position, keeping his inner eye open and fixed, as an onlooker at a wonderful show. He should be steady enough not to be dragged and bogged down into the mire of sloth and unconsciousness. Eternal vigilance, alertness, and self-observation need be his virtues in this upward movement. It may be pointed out that this period of upward movement of *śakti* is marked by a gradual transformation or spiritualisation of the aspirant's body and mind, culminating in the emergence of what is known as the 'Body of Light' (*baindava-śarīra*), corresponding to the 'Spiritual Body' of St. Paul.[9]

It is in the course of the ascent of *Śakti* that one

9. As an illustration of the process of spiritual transformation, I would like to refer to the case of a living Indian mystic (named 'P'), personally known to me. He has written a detailed memoir of his personal experience from the first awakening of *kuṇḍalinī* to the Supreme Divine Experience possible in the human

finds, in some exceptional cases, the phenomenon of levitation. The body, being fully merged in the illumined soul loses its impurities and is no longer subject to the gravitational pull. It then rises up in the air and remains poised in space. This is what is called

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body. His *guru* was a great saint of Vārānasī, celebrated as Siddhi Mātā, who lived a secluded life in the city. 'P' says that in his own case it was found that the awakening of *kuṇḍalinī* was followed by the emergence of a substance which revealed itself most vividly in the *viśuddha-cakra,* after which it began to ascend along the inner path upwards to the *ajñā-cakra*. Having reached this destination, the spiritual light mentioned above assumed the form of a clear human figure exactly resembling the material body of 'P'. This form was actually the inner self of the *yogin*, waiting at the threshold of the higher awakening, ready to be released from the bonds of dense matter. 'P' felt that when the ascent of the Light into the *sahasrāra* and its assumption of a perfect form was complete, the *puruṣa* and the *prakṛti* elements in *sahasrāra* were unified as a result of the ascent of the *kuṇḍalinī*. The above form then merged into the Form of the Spirit, but before the merger was effected, the entire phenomenal world and all its processes dissolved into the world of *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*. This body, in its upward ascent, then, left the physical body and realised, with the third eye now fully opened, that it had entered into pure *cidākāśa*. This opening of the third eye marked the awakening of the spirit of *Brahman*. This body had, thus, three eyes, viz., the two normal eyes of the old unregenerated body, and the third eye which was then opened. The third eye, when it was opened once, never closed again. In the earlier stage, this third eye had looked like a long vertical stroke of a spiritual light above the middle of the two eyebrows. The manifestation of this form was a clear evidence of the existence of spirit apart from matter. The supernal views in the *cidākāśa* floated before the spiritual body. But they were visible to it only when its eyes were all opened and when the vision of the Self (*ātma-*

the *sāttvika* body, free for the time being from the effects of *tamas*. The characteristics of *sattva* are said to be levity or lightness (*lāghava*) and illumination (*prakāśa*), both of which are manifested in this state. There are two aspects of levitation which may be noted here. In some cases the physical body, under the influence of the Inner Light, is actually raised up, as referred to above; but in other cases the physical body remains unconscious on the ground, while a luminous duplicate issuing from it rises up, keeping itself in touch with the original body by a silver cord. In

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darśana) took place, beyond the stage of *sahasrāra*. In that state wave after wave of joyous experience came as a part of *nitya-līlā*. This was a state of *Brahman* in which the spirit enjoyed the delights of *vaikuṇṭha-līlā* in the *cidākāśa*. The next step beyond this was one of absolute calm and serenity when the Spirit was ensconced in a 'peace that passeth comprehension'. It was a higher state in *Brahman*, beyond which was the next higher state of Infinite Void (*mahāśūnya*) in which the spiritual body became fully subject to an irresistible upward pull. In this state, the past *kārmic* forces of innumerable lives revealed themselves. The *mahāśūnya* state was followed by an entry into *para-vyoman* through its passage into what is known to the *yogins* as *bhramara-guhā*. The spiritual form became completely purged and purified in the *bhramara-guhā* before it entered into *para-vyoman*. Even in *para-vyoman* where the vision of the Absolute is perfect, there are numerous stages through which the spiritual body has to pass. Ultimately the *hlādinī-śakti* of the Supreme Lord asserted itself, and the Spirit began to enjoy the Divine Union in a state of Eternal Blissfulness. In this Union he observed that the Spirit and the Divine appear alternately as what we may call Active and Passive Partners in the Supreme Union. This was followed by an admission into the supreme stage of Perfection in which One alone shines and enjoys Itself through Itself.

the latter case, the physical body remains unconscious, and all consciousness concentrates on the duplicate floating body of light, strong or mild. But cases of levitation are known to occur also under the impact of an Outer Light, which is the fountainhead of Power, entering the physical body from above. In this case the body is lifted up and kept poised in space for sometime, either in a static position or moving it through long distances. The question of ravishment, considered as an aspect of ecstatic union, deserves to be carefully studied in the light of the varied experiences of the *yogin*. The experiences of a *vīra-sādhaka* of the *kaula-mārga*, in union with *Śakti*, come under this category. The onset is usually sudden, and the entire physical body remains either totally immobile or may seem to have disappeared altogether. The path of esoteric mystic culture based on this suddenness of illumination is known as *sāhasa-mārga*.

The *Śāmbhavī* way refers to the highest *upāya* by which even this upward movement of *Śakti*, leading the seeker on from sphere to sphere, without any effort on his part, comes to an end. The seeker, in fact, is now in a state of perfection — the river itself has merged in the Ocean and is no longer subject to the movements of its earlier stages. The soul in this stage is one with the Universal Consciousness and is possessed of the *śākta-deha* enjoying now the fullness of Supreme Light and Power. The soul by itself is not aware of this fact. It is the *Śāmbhava* way which aims at the manifestation of this awareness. This stage marks the union of *Śiva* and *Śakti* in which the Supreme 'I' reveals Itself to Itself (*pūrṇāhaṁtā*).

The *Śāmbhavī-vidyā*, as known to the ancient *rāja-yoga* school, represents the supreme hidden lore, which has been continuously guarded through the ages as a secret treasure in all esoteric schools of *Vaidika* and *Tāntrika Yoga*.

The so-called *dhārā-yantra*[10] referred to in *Amanaska* is really an advanced form of the above *Śāmbhavī-vidyā*. Watchfulness (*anusandhāna*) is described in the above work as the key-note of this mystic process.

It should be remembered that in plenary mystic experience, the mind reaches complete stillness. It is a state of God-realisation; but it is not a perfect realisation. It is only an ecstatic state which ends as soon as the mind wakes up from its stillness. It is followed by a state when God-realisation is not affected in the least, even after the revival of the mind. The next higher state is when the *Parā-saṁvit* emerges in its fullest glory. This state is reached only by very fortunate souls. In this glorious state, perfect freedom is attained so that the re-emergence of the mind and the world or of other things associated with them makes no difference at all. It is well known that the Persian mystics used to draw a distinction between the *Majzub* and the *Qutb*, standing for the mystic absorbed in God and the pole or centre, respectively. In the state of perfect freedom no such distinction has any validity.

Those who are familiar with the *Virūpākṣapañcaśikha*

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10. *ūrdhvamuṣṭiradhodṛṣṭirūrdhva bhedopyadhaḥ śiraḥ .*
dhārāyantra vidhānena jīvanmukto bhaviṣyati ..

are well aware of the successive stages through which the awakened soul has to pass, in order to reach the highest state of God-realisation, in which the soul attains the apex of Divine Majesty and Glory. The seven stages of spiritual progression of a *Bodhisattva* signify the successive stages through which the mind sanctifies and elevates itself and reaches the highest peak of *Bodhisattva*-hood. The seven stages recognised by *Yoga-vāśiṣṭha* and described in other works like *Bodhasāra,* mean a similarly graded progression towards Perfection.

It should always be kept in mind that every aspirant, going ahead along the spiritual path, follows his own spiritual pattern; and it is not necessary that all the patterns should be uniformly alike and similar.

In a brief introduction it is not possible to make a detailed survey of the actual, as well as the merely traditional, methods of approach, or of the specific quality of the mystic experience in each case. In her preliminary review of the essentials of Indian mysticism, the author has in a masterly manner surveyed and examined the basic and fundamental features of mysticism in the light of the traditional teachings of India. In this connection she has admirably dwelt upon some of the most familiar ways of approach, in terms of popular conception, of *karma, jñāna, bhakti,* and *yoga.* The mystics selected by her are of the modern age, all great and immortal in their own ways. Their worth as mystics can be assessed only through a diligent and searching study of their lives and works. Moreover, success in an intellectual venture like this depends on a heart sustained by faith and reverence, harmonised with a mind of critical insight. A reading

of her book will show that the author has fully brought all this to bear upon her really outstanding work. It is a brilliant exposition. I can only hope that the book, even though the author calls it a modest attempt, will prove a valuable source of living inspiration to all future scholars in the field.

Gurupurṇimā
July, 1974
Varanasi.

Gopinath Kaviraj

PREFACE

The following pages embody a modest endeavour of the author to present a panoramic picture of mysticism, as practised and pursued during the last hundred and fifty years in our land. Yet the endeavour was taken up in all the seriousness which the subject deserves; and despite the author's deep faith in the validity and greatness of mystic experience, she has attempted to treat the topic critically, in the spirit of philosophical enquiry. Mystic experience transcends the barriers of time and place. The mystic experiences of our forefathers are today the most cherished part of our heritage. It is a truism that when the first man, with the powers to feel and think, saw his surroundings, his spontaneous response was nothing but that of a mystic. Indeed, civilization may be stated to have dawned with mysticism. A profound sense of awe fired the primordial man to grasp the truth hidden behind the apparent reality. The result was direct intuition of Reality, a fact which in man's subsequent history has continually supplied him with sustenance for the best part of his life. We may or may not accept what Jung, with a wealth of data, has tried to establish in his analysis of the collective unconscious. But the fact remains that the memories of those primeval experiences have been relayed to the succeeding generations, and by their impact have given a particular stamp to man's inner being. Naturally, all mystic experiences, everywhere and at all times, have drawn heavily upon those experiences at the dawn of human civilisation.

Naturally, all mystic experiences, in their fundamentals, have the same deep awareness of Reality lying embedded at the heart of the phenomenal world, and an intuitive approach towards its discovery as did the ancients have. In other words, it has been, all along, a pursuit of the Infinite by the finite human being. In this process the Infinite has unfolded itself through the varying textures of the human heart and mind, and has brought about multitudinous reverberations in the human soul without ever affecting or modifying the fundamentals. Modern Indian mysticism, with some of whose aspects the present work is concerned, is, therefore, a segment of a very large canvas.

Nineteenth-century India is recognised as the period of national awakening which brought in its wake the modern Indian renaissance. The century witnessed the breaking of the intellectual and spiritual torpor which had earlier gripped the nation; and saw the beginning of many movements in various directions,— literary, political, and spiritual. In the religious field, the nation was confronted with a great challenge. The Western impact upon Indian culture brought about an explosive situation in which the nation's new *elite* developed an attitude of deep aversion for the native religious faiths, and the proselytising zeal of the Christian missionaries led many a young man away from his ancestral religious fold to the fold of Christianity, which was the religion of the all-powerful rulers of the land. In such a situation the religions of India had perforce to assert themselves. Gone were the days of an exclusive preoccupation with the quibblings and controversies, as indulged in

by the men learned in religious lore. The very existence of the Indian religions was at stake, on account of the powerful onslaughts of Christianity. The need of the hour was the re-establishment of the religious truths through unimpeachable living experiences. In order to restore Indian religions to their pristine purity, it was necessary to practise their truths, rather than merely profess them. Mere promises, without living up to the religious ideals in actual life, could not have brought back the errant young man of the day to his original religious fold.

It was *Zeitgeist* which produced the stalwarts, the great leaders of the modern Indian religious and spiritual renaissance, who, by their profound experiences and the spiritual wisdom, revitalised the nation. These great men, through intuitive experiences, set aglow not merely their own inner beings but also those of millions of their compatriots. Whatever they said carried the deepest conviction of truth. Their visions and intuitive flashes helped dispel all notions of doubt and scepticism. They wielded magic through their powerful personalities. In their contact, avowed skeptics were converted into faithful souls. Thus, it was they who built the spiritual foundation of modern India. Most of these saints have since cast away their mortal frames. But we are fortunate that there are a few among them who are still in our midst today, the most illustrious among the latter being Mother Ānandamayī. Those who have left, form a galaxy in a distant world, but the light continues to shine upon us and will eternally illumine the paths of the teeming millions of the land.

It is indeed a hard task to subject the living ex-

periences of the mystics to a critical examination. The etherial and ideal nature of the experiences refuses to be dovetailed and straitjacketed like that. The genesis of such experiences shows that they well forth from the fountains of extremely rare visions. To judge objectively, one is required to have, as an essential prerequisite, an unswerving attitude of dispassion. But the poet's lamentation that 'we murder to dissect' applies with equal force to any laboratory method when applied to the assessment of such a delicate subject as 'mystic experience', which is unspeakable. Will not the dissection cut at the roots of the integral experience which a mystic vision always is ? If, on the other hand, a sympathetic and appreciative approach is brought to bear upon the issue, is not the objectivity which is essential to any serious enquiry sacrificed thereby ? Hence the situation is that, if the enquirer is within it, he loses independence and objectivity; if he is without, he is unqualified for the job. How to solve this paradox ? Comparative religion, with mysticism as its essence, can alone, in a subtle manner, point out the solution of this paradox. An appreciative mind need not essentially be isolated from objective assessment of an intensely and absorbingly spiritual situation. A harmony of the two distinct approaches is not merely a possible, but an essential, condition, especially in this context. Mystic experience can thus be handled by a critic in the same way as aesthetics or human emotions can be, on a subjective-objective level. It is certainly not an easy job; but the high tension, produced by such a composite approach, and its fruits are invaluably rewarding.

The author has thus assiduously pursued the comparative approach in her study of mysticism. Mysticism deals with direct experience of the nature of God. Its bedrock is the life which is in full involvement with the mystery and awe of the Divine Being. Its realisation has no validity other than the intuitional one. Though it be the anchor of all religious philosophy, it defies all attempts at logical analysis and definition. Any attempt at understanding it must, therefore, be founded upon a careful tracing of the entire ground of a particular mystic, and then subjecting it to a comparative assessment by the collation of similar data from the lives of the other mystics. It is only thus that both the particular and the general in all mystic experience can be understood. The author's treatment of the mystics in this work has all along been done in this light.

The Indian religious saints of the last hundred and fifty years may be categorised into three types : Hindus, Muslims, and Christians. In spite of all her good intentions, the author found that most of the Muslim and Christian mystics had to be eliminated owing to the extreme paucity of materials about them. Besides the Muslim mystic, Huzur Mahārāj, and the Christian mystic, Sādhu Sundar Singh, the mystics dealt with in this work are all Hindus. The author can only regret this, which was due to circumstances beyond her control. Moreover, in regard to the Hindu mystics, the author's predicament was caused by the sheer number and variety. The problem of selection was extremely difficult. The Hindu mystics belonging to the diverse religious schools and cults were too many to be ade-

quately treated within the limited range of the present work. That explains why many known (and little known) saints have been left out. Among the mystic who have had an international celebrity, the author can only regret the noninclusion of Svāmī Rāmatīrtha, Yogānanda Paramahaṁsa, and Śrī Aurobindo. Yet she feels that these three towering personalities deserve independent and extensive attention. Because each of them was a colossus, only a fringe of their personalities could have been touched upon within the limits of single chapters.

Therefore, of the numerous mystics belonging to the period under review, only ten from Rāmakṛṣṇa to Ānandamayī have been brought under our enquiry and assessment. Notwithstanding the fact that all of them are links in the same golden chain, each of them as a mystic has some uniqueness of his or her own. They represent, thus, the various phases of the mystic wave in modern India. Moreover, reliable literature on them is available, which facilitates the process of assessment. But lest there should be any misapprehension, the author makes it clear that she has been completely non-sectarian and non-parochial in making this selection. She has not given any advantage to a particular sect or any particular faith. Her only yardstick has been the genuineness of the mystic experience; and her aim, the achievement of a total perspective, within the limitations stated above.

Unfortunately, in regard to the available literature, the author's experience has been that these vary a good deal in the degree of authenticity. Most of

these demand careful scrutiny and a good deal of editing. Absolute reliance may be placed only on the records penned by the mystics themselves, or those written by their close disciples at their dictation, or the critical assessments of the mystic experiences made by unimpeachable authorities. They are stated as follows :

(1) The allegorical *Āśāvatīr-upākhyāna* of Vijayakṛṣṇa Gosvāmin, depicting his inner struggle and his success in finding a *sadguru*; the writings of Svāmijī Mahārāj and of Sādhu Sundar Singh; the diary of Santadāsa Bābājī, containing the programme of his spiritual culture and experiences — these are examples of the first category.

(2) Next to these come the records by those who were direct disciples and had at least direct access to the mystics after the latter's illumination. In this category are the writings of 'M', viz., *Rāmakṛṣṇa Kathāmṛta*, of Svāmī Vivekānanda on Rāmakṛṣṇa, and the *Sadguru Saṅga* of Brahmacārin Kuladānanda, an extensive record of the teachings of his *guru* Vijayakṛṣṇa. Although these records are taken to be absolutely faithful representations of their Masters' views, they are still tempered and processed by the writers' individual understanding.

(3) To the third category belong those writings which emanate when the vital experience of a mystic is critically reviewed and condensed

into an article of faith. It is a scholarly work in which intellect plays a dominant role in sifting the materials and marshalling them into a consistent system. Heiler, on Sādhu Sundar Singh, and Barthwal, on Svāmijī Mahārāj, have produced works of this type. The world of scholarship and spirituality must always acknowledge its debt of gratitude to these great scholars.

Moreover, some of the writings under the first two categories are so cryptic and enigmatical, *e.g.*, the writings of Prabhu Jagadbandhu and Svāmī Pūrṇānanda, that it is well-nigh impossible to derive their meaning. In spite of this difficulty, the author made a strong effort to go into these examples of baffling expressions and esoteric language, and with much care and industry tried to understand and interpret them. The interpretations have been embodied in the present work.

A word of explanation and apology is needed for the big body of chapters in respect to particular mystics. For example, the chapters on Rāmakṛṣṇa and Vijayakṛṣṇa are much bigger than the chapters on the other mystics. Some of the mystics have been confined within the limits of comparatively small chapters. The reason for this is, however, the paucity of reliable materials concerning their lives, activities, and teachings. Some of the mystics have been themselves very taciturn and reticent. Others have not only been very lucidly expressive, as Rāmakṛṣṇa and Vijayakṛṣṇa, but have also had disciples who brought out comprehen-

sive and systematic expositions of their teachings. But the size of the chapters is in no way any indication of preference or otherwise. Over and above the mass of dependable information collected from the three sources stated above, the author spared no pains to glean and collate materials herself by tapping various other sources.

It was indeed a bright day in her life when the author was introduced to Mother Ānandamayī, who is still living. Since that day, the author has moved closer to this great saint-mystic, and has been graced by her benedictions. While it has been simply impossible for her not to be overwhelmed by the magnetic pull of this deeply spiritual personality, she has also endeavoured to be as dispassionate as possible in order to present the Mother's view. In regard to the assessment of the mystic element in Ānandamayī's spiritual pursuit, the author is aware that the evidence collected by her for use in this work has got intermingled with personal and subjective reactions and attitudes. Yet even in this rather difficult case, objectivity has not been thrown overboard. How far the author has succeeded in conforming to the rules of intellectual discipline, it is for the readers to judge. The details about the materials drawn upon will be found at their appropriate places, and also in the Bibliography.

The treatment of the subject-matter falls into three broad sections. The first volume is devoted to a study and understanding of the theories and principles of mysticism with reference to India. The second volume deals with the lives, religious experiences, and

teachings of ten representative mystics of the last hundred and fifty years, with an eye upon the uniqueness with which each one of them impresses us. The third volume is taken up with a critical review and assessment. Wherever possible, a comparative evaluation of their mystic contributions, in the light of the time-honoured essentials of mysticism, has been made. It is interesting to note the fact — to which the author must draw the attention of the scholarly reader — that the vital experiences of the mystics might serve as a corrective to theories in vogue. The essentials of mysticism might undergo some modifications in this process. New discoveries might be made bringing to light so far unknown but vitally important new factors on account of which the theoretical structure might undergo a process of reorientation. If it were so, it would be a challenging situation, to face which, the objective assessor must remain prepared.

The author desires to put on record her deep sense of obligation, to a source which prefers to remain anonymous, for her information regarding Svāmījī Mahārāj. Professor J. S. Yajnik of the Banaras Hindu University, whose recent demise the author mourns, deserves thanks for lending his copy of the *Vāmā Līlā*, bearing upon the great mystic Vāmā Kṣepā. To the Svāmījīs of the Ramakrishna Mission not only of Vārānasī but of all the other centres of the world, the author is reverentially grateful for allowing her to utilise their libraries and valuable publications. The Librarian of Gaekwad Library, Banaras Hindu University, has laid the author under a deep obligation by his almost

missionary zeal in assisting her with the required books and journals.

Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, the great statesman-philosopher, most kindly accepted the author as one of his students. In the formative years of her life, the advent of this great scholar was nothing short of a divine grace. His vital and arresting personality has since then been a perennial source of inspiration to the author's intellectual pursuits and her way of life. It was he who led the author to study mysticism. His affection and guidance came to the author in the most unstinting manner.

No living Indian scholar has studied philosophy, religion, and mysticism more deeply and self-absorbingly than the great scholar and philosopher-saint of Vārānasī, Mahāmahopādhyāya Gopīnāth Kavirāj, M.A., D.Litt., Padmavibhūṣaṇa, in whom intellectual pursuits of the highest order are truly blended with vital spiritual understanding. At a very early stage of her study of Indian mysticism, the author came under the ponderous scholarship of this great intellectual giant. If the idea behind the present work came from Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, who helped the author chart out the path for it, it was Pandit Gopīnāth Kavirāj who guided the author through well-defined stages of the enquiry required for the completion of the work in a satisfactory manner. With infinite patience and care and boundless affection, it was Gopīnāth Kavirāj who lucidly answered many of the author's questions on mysticism. As a matter of fact, the author would have been lost in quandaries but for Gopīnāth

Kavirāj's light. About the present work, if the author is permitted to use the figure, it was Gopīnāth Kavirāj who breathed life into a clod. With the thoroughness of an ancient *ṛṣi*, he led the author from darkness to light. He was as unsparing in making demands as in bestowing spiritual gifts, even in his old age and with failing health. He was as exacting as affectionate. For all this, the author is deeply grateful. To my these two teachers, the book is dedicated with respect.

The present work has grown out of the nucleus of a thesis which was approved for the degree of Doctor of Literature in Philosophy of Calcutta University. The work in the present shape is the result of a thorough recasting of the thesis. A mass of new material has been incorporated in it, and new ideas have been introduced in order to bring the work to the present form. The author takes this opportunity to thank the examiners of the thesis, who wholeheartedly commended its merits.

The Mother of Śrī Aurobindo Āśrama, Pondicherry, blessed the author's husband and the author, and gave them many words of encouragement and light. To her, the author respectfully conveys her deep sense of gratitude and love. Śrī Arabinda Basu, the author's husband, and formerly Spalding Lecturer of Indian Philosophy and Religion at the University of Durham, U.K., never failed to extend the much-needed cooperation when the author was in the midst of preparing the work. His wise counsel, moreover, was of great help. All this the author can never forget.

I thank Sri N. V. Naidu, research scholar at the Centre of Advanced Study in Philosophy, Banaras Hindu University for helping me in reading the manuscripts with me.

Banaras Hindu University,
Varanasi-5.

Sobharani Basu

Deepāwalī, November, 1974

ABBREVIATIONS

A.P. .. *Ācārya Prasaṅga*

(Based on Sāradākānta's Diary in Bengali). Edited by Kuladānanda Brahmacārin. Calcutta. B.S. 1332.

A.M. .. *Śrī Śrī Mā Ānandamayī*

(In Bengali, in sixteen parts). By Gurupriyā Devī. B.S. 1345.

A.M.P. .. *Śrī Śrī Mā Ānandamayī Prasaṅga*

(In Bengali, in two parts). By Amulya Kumar Dutta Gupta. B.S. 1338 and 1348.

A.U. .. *Āśāvatīr Upākhyāna*

(In Bengali). By Vijayakṛṣṇa Gosvāmin.

A.Y. .. *Light on the Anand-Yog.*

Dictated by M. Shew Vhart Lalji. Lahore. 1931.

B.K. .. *Bandhukathā*

(In Bengali). By Suresh Candra Cakravarty. Third Edition. B.S. 1325.

C.C. .. *Caitanya Caritāmṛta*

(In Bengali). By Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja

C.E. .. *Catechism of Enquiry*

(Being a translation of the original instructions of Ramaṇa Maharṣi). 1940.

C.I. .. *Catechism of Instruction*
(Being a translation of the original instructions of Ramaṇa Maharṣi). 1940.

Disc. .. *Discourses on Radhasoami Faith*
By Maharaj Saheb Pandit Brahm Śaṅkar Misra. Benares. 1929.

G.A. .. *Saiyedena Hazrat Gaus-ul-Azam*
By Saiyed Abdus Salik. Calcutta. 1939.

G.S.S. .. *Guru Śiṣya Saṁvāda*
(In Bengali). By Santadāsa Bābājī. Second Edition. 1935.

Gosp. S. .. *Gospel of Sadhu Sundar Singh*
By Prof. Fredrich Heiler.

H.K. .. *Harikathā*
(In Bengali). By Bandhu Govinda Das.

I.M. .. *Studies in Islamic Mysticism*
By R. A. Nicholson. Cambridge. 1921.

Jagad. .. *Jagadbandhu*
(In Bengali). By Prafulla Kumar Sarkar.

J. Huz. .. *Jīvana Carita Huzur Svāmījī Mahārāj*
(In Hindi). By Lala Pratap Singh. Allahabad. 1909.

Kaṭha Up. .. *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*

L.R. .. *The Life of Ramakrishna*
By Romain Rolland. English translation by E. F. Malcolmsmith. Māyāvatī (Almora). 1930.

M. Ānand. .. *Mā Ānandamayī*
(In Bengali). By Devotees. Banaras 1946.

Mbh. .. *Mahābhārata*

M.D. .. *Mātṛdaraśana*
(In Bengali). By Bhāijī. Calcutta.

M.G. .. *Maharshi's Gospel*
(In two books, being answers of Ramaṇa Maharṣi to questions put to him). 1944.

M.H. .. *Biography of My Huzur*
By 'Abdul Gaffar. Second Edition. Calcutta. 1934.

M.M. .. *Śrī Śrī Mahāmṛtyuraṅga*
(In Bengali). By Maticchanna Mahendra with Mahānāma Mahā Sañjivanī Bhāṣya by Mahānāmavrata. B.S. 1341.

Muṇḍ. Up. .. *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*

P.J. .. *Prabhu Jagadbandhu*
(In Bengali). By Brahmacārin Parimalbandhu Das. Calcutta. B.S. 1347.

P.P. .. *Paramahaṁsa Pūrṇānanda Svāmīr Patrāvalī*
(In Bengali, in two parts). B.S. 1344 and 1345.

R.G. .. *Ramaṇa Gītā*

By Gaṇapati Muni. 1937.

R.J. .. *Śrī Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa Paramahaṁsa Dever Jīvanvṛttānta.*

(In Bengali). By Rāmacandra. Fifth Edition. B.S. 1341.

R.K. .. *Śrī Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa Kathāmṛta*

(In Bengali). By 'M'

Part I : Fourteenth Edition. B.S. 1348.

Part II : Eighth Edition. B.S. 1343.

Part III : Seventh Edition. B.S. 1347.

Part IV : Fourth Edition. B.S. 1339.

Part V : First Edition. B.S. 1339.

R.L. .. *Śrī Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa Līlāprasaṅga*

(In Bengali). By Sv. Sāradānanda

Part I : *Pūrvakathā-o-bālyajīvana.* Fifth Edition. B.S. 1343.

Part II : *Sādhakabhāva.* Sixth Edition. B.S.1344.

Part III : *Gurubhāva (pūrvārdha).* Sixth Edition. B.S. 1342.

Part IV : *Gurubhāva (uttarārdha).* Fifth Edition. B.S. 1344.

Part V : *Divyabhāva.* Fourth Edition. B.S. 1342.

R.S.M.P. .. *Radha Soami Mat Prakash*

By Huzur Maharaj Rai Salig Ram Bahadur of Agra.

S.D. .. *Sad-Darśana*

By Ramaṇa Maharṣi.

S.D.Bhāṣya.. *Sad-Darśana Bhāṣya*
and talks with Maharṣi. Second Edition. 1936.

S.J. .. *Śrī 108 Svāmī Santadāsa Bābājī Mahārājer Jīvanacarita*
(In Bengali). By Svāmī Dhanañjaya Das. 1940.

S.O.S. .. *Sadguru-O-Sādhantattva*
(In Bengali, in two parts). By Haridasa Basu. First Edition. B.S. 1326.

S.R. .. *Self-Realisation*
By B. V. Narasimha Svāmī. Fourth Edition. 1944.

S. Rah. .. *Sādhana Rahasya*
(In Bengali). By Brahmacārin Harinārāyaṇa. B.S. 1350 and 1351.

S.S. .. *Śrī Śrī Sadguru Saṅga*
(In Bengali). By Kuladānanda Brahmacārin.
Part I : Second Edition. B.S. 1332.
Part II : Second Edition. B.S. 1333.
Part III : Third Edition. B.S. 1332.
Part IV : First Edition. B.S. 1331.
Part V : First Edition. B.S. 1335.

S.V. .. *Sadguru Vāṇī*
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I–4 (45/2/125–72)

S.M.S.L. .. *A Supreme Message of Spiritual Liberty* By Prof. Inayat Khan. London. 1914.

T.S. .. *Tantrābhilāsīr Sādhusaṅga* (In Bengali). By Pramode Kumar Cattopādhyāya. First Edition. B.S. 1348.

U.S. .. *Upadeśa Sāram* By Ramaṇa Maharṣi with English translation and notes by B. V. Narsimha Svami. Third Edition. 1938.

V.G. .. *Prabhupāda Vijayakṛṣṇa Gosvāmī* (In Bengali). By Jagadbandhu Mitra. B.S. 1318.

V.K. .. *Śrī Śrī Vijaya Kathāmṛta* (In Bengali, in two parts). By Navakumar Bāgcī (Biswas).

V.Kr. .. *Life of Vijayakrishna* By Bishnu Charan Das. 1940.

V.Kṣ. .. *Vāmā Kṣepā* (In Bengali). By Jogindra Nath Cattopādhyāya. Fourth Edition. B.S. 1333.

V.L. .. *Vāmā Līlā* (In Bengali). By Haricaraṇa Gangopādhyāya.

TRANSLITERATIONS

Vowels

अ	=	A	,	a
आ	=	Ā	,	ā
इ	=	I	,	i
ई	=	Ī	,	ī
उ	=	U	,	u
ऊ	=	Ū	,	ū
ऋ	=	Ṛ	,	ṛ
ऌ	=	Ḷ	,	ḷ
ए	=	E	,	e
ऐ	=	AI	,	ai
ओ	=	O	,	o
औ	=	AU	,	au

Consonants

क	=	KA	,	ka
ख	=	KHA	,	kha
ग	=	GA	,	ga
घ	=	GHA	,	gha
ङ	=	Ṅ	,	ṅ
च	=	CA	,	ca
छ	=	CHA	,	cha
ज	=	JA	,	ja
झ	=	JHA	,	jha
ञ	=	Ñ	,	ñ
ट	=	ṬA	,	ṭa
ठ	=	ṬHA	,	ṭha
ड	=	ḌA	,	ḍa
ढ	=	ḌHA	,	ḍha
ण	=	ṆA	,	ṇa
त	=	TA	,	ta
थ	=	THA	,	tha
द	=	DA	,	da
ध	=	DHA	,	dha
न	=	NA	,	na
प	=	PA	,	pa
फ	=	PHA	,	pha

ब	=	BA ,	ba
भ	=	BHA ,	bha
म	=	MA ,	ma
म्	=	M ,	m
य	=	YA ,	ya
र	=	RA ,	ra
ल	=	LA ,	la
व	=	VA ,	va
श	=	ŚA ,	śa
ष	=	ṢA ,	ṣa
स	=	SA ,	sa
ह	=	HA ,	ha
क्ष	=	KṢA ,	kṣa
त्र	=	TRA ,	tra
ज्ञ	=	JÑA ,	jña
ं	(*anusvāra*)	Ṁ ,	ṁ
ः	(*visarga*)	AḤ ,	aḥ
ऽ	(*avagraha*)		

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1

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CHAPTER XII

1

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Volume One

ESSENTIALS OF INDIAN MYSTICISM

Chapter I

PREAMBLE TO MYSTICISM

Definition, value, and validity of mysticism—India, the land of the mystics.

Definition, Value, and Validity of Mysticism :

An accurate definition of mysticism, comprehensive enough to cover the experiences of the well-known mystics of the world, is rather difficult to formulate. However, the term '*mysticism*' is generally employed to represent a method of arriving at a direct and intuitive experience of the Supreme Reality. It also aims at establishing a close intimacy with the Supreme Reality, through love, ecstasy, etc. Finally and in a permanent form, its pursuit is for a Unified Life, which aims at one's absorption in the Absolute. It is a life which is consummate in the integral experience. At this final stage of mystic intimacy with the Supreme Reality, all contradictions, whether personal or impersonal, whether concerning being or non-being, are fully resolved in the realisation of the transcendental unity of the Ineffable.

The Divine Reality transcends the world of relations and all perceptive manifestations. At the same time, it is also immanent in the universe as its governor and sustainer. On the microcosmic scale, the Divine Reality resides in the heart of each individual, guiding and witnessing his activities. In other words, mysticism is the medium for an immediate and fully self-conscious union of the soul with the Divine. Finally, mysticism aims at a transcendence both of the individual and the universal consciousness to attain Supernal Bliss. Mysticism is thus concerned with a radiant blossoming of man's inner Being, and understandably enough, it does not attach any importance to formalisms. The laws guiding man's inner life are the same everywhere and at all times. Hence all mysticism is essentially similar. It may be that the physical and intellectual symbolism which expresses a particular mystical experience has a unique character. But in its essence as an inner experience, it has the same quality. And yet it is so rich in variety that almost every individual mystic's experience bears the stamp of his own uniqueness. The reason for this, however, is not far to seek. For there is an element of 'mystery' in every soul, which no amount of analysis, scientific or philosophical, is ever able to resolve; and it is this element which determines the specific character of the enjoyment, which the soul feels in communion with the Divine. This explains the extreme difficulty—rather the impossibility—of defining the mystic consciousness, its inexhaustible richness, its interminable creative vitality, and of expressing it in terms of the categories of the intellect. Caird's definition of mysticism, as a mental attitude in which all other rela-

tions are swallowed up in the relation of the soul to God, is at best only a statement of the fact by an onlooker.

The validity and value of mysticism as a mode of direct comprehension of God can hardly be called in question when one finds wonderful harmony in the realisation and expressions of different mystics, ancient, medieval, or modern, in the East or in the West. The volume of evidence in support of this concurrence is too heavy to be easily set aside as insignificant. Every religion which claims to be revealed has its ultimate sanction in the teachings proceeding from the mystic experience of its founder. And even the scientists have begun to realise, as J. A. Thomson has rightly pointed out, that it is through mystical experience only, and not through scientific investigation, that we can pass from Nature, with which alone we are directly acquainted, up to Nature's God. Knowledge of God, says J. S. Haldane, consists in the perception that, in the conscious personality of every individual, a Reality is manifested which entirely transcends the individual. There is no reason why mysticism, which expressly aims at this transcendence, should not be recognised as a sublime subject worthy of proper study and cultivation.

India, the Land of Mystics :

India is a pre-eminent land of mystics. From the Vedic times right through the Buddhist and Jaina periods down to the medieval Hindu renaissance, flowering in the brilliant schools of the *Śaivas, Śāktas,*

Vaiṣṇavas, and others, and then again in the earlier and later epochs of the modern age represented by the religious movements associated with the *Siddhācāryas, Sants, Bāuls, Sahajiyās, Kartābhajās, Faqīrs, Nāthas*, etc., we come across hosts of saints and adepts whose title to recognition was based on the depth of their mystic realisation. Some of these mystics have left behind in writing or in songs an account of their personal experiences; but there are others about whom our information is derived only from secondary sources.

A comprehensive history of Indian mysticism is yet to be written. It cannot be successfully taken up until a lot of spade work, more or less preliminary in character, has already been accomplished. A great literature has already sprung up and is daily growing in volume bearing on different aspects of the subject, including lives of the mystics with special reference to their search after God, presenting their spiritual experiences, and explaining their outlook on Reality. An important chapter of this history will consist in a systematic study of mystic life and philosophy of modern India. It may be added that even in the modern age with its trenchant rationalism and triumph of materialism accompanied by a steady decline of faith, India has produced a number of saints and devotees of the highest spiritual eminence.

The following pages are intended to embody the results of a regular course of study and research into the lives and teachings of some of these modern mystics of India. In view of the bulk of the matter surveyed so far, it will not be possible for me to con-

sider here, even in outline, the most important mystics of this age and do justice to them all, such as their greatness demands. I, therefore, propose to confine my special studies in the present instance to only a few representative personalities, each representing a class by himself. This limitation of scope does not imply the least disregard for the other great souls whose claim to consideration is equally strong. For we know, as Nicholson says in his *The Mystics of Islam,* that most of the great saints live and die in great obscurity; and in certain cases it is observed, as the same author notes elsewhere, that an unrecognised saint is even greater than a recognised one. Besides their representative character, the other factor which has influenced my choice is the fact that each of these is the centre of a wide circle of devotees and admirers.

Though my special studies will be confined to an appreciation of the religious and spiritual culture and experience together with the teachings of each of the mystics separately, an attempt is made to include in a concluding section, a general review of modern Indian mysticism in the light of the actual realisations, methods, and instructions of the mystics concerned. As a detailed consideration of all the essentials of modern mysticism, and a survey of all the great schools of mysticism in India, is not possible in a work like this, I have been content, for the present, with giving a brief account of my findings based on comparative analysis and evaluation, and bringing out the unique and striking features of the present day mysticism of India, as represented by some modern mystics.

I–5 (45/2/125—72)

CHAPTER II

NATURE OF MYSTIC EXPERIENCE

Description of the Mystic Experience of the Ultimate Reality (*Saccidānanda*) — The Transcendental Consciousness — Abhinavagupta's view of the Highest Truth — Kabir, Dattātreya, Asaṅga, and Nāgārjuna on Mystic Experience — Christian mysticism — *Ṣūfī* mysticism — Arjuna's Universal Vision and Buddha's Experience — The integral nature of Reality — Four visions of Reality according to Kaṭha Upaniṣad — Suprasensory Experience.

Description of the Mystic Experience of the Ultimate Reality (*Saccidānanda*) :

For a proper appreciation of the specific contribution which an individual saint has made to the history of mysticism in general, it is necessary to have some clear idea of the nature of mystic experience. One should distinguish it from the allied quasi-mystic attitudes of mind, as illustrated in aesthetic and artistic intuitions, etc. The method of its origin, its important types, and its bearing upon the life of the individual and upon the society, need also be clearly and correctly understood. In this connection, while making the

preliminary survey, I shall confine myself, as far as possible, to the literature available in Saṁskrit as well as in the modern Indian languages. In order to supplement the available information and also to confirm my conclusion, I shall also tap, wherever necessary, other reliable sources and use the data available elsewhere.

Excellent works dealing with Hellenic, Christian, and Islāmic mysticism, and also with Gnosticism, have appeared from time to time. These have brought together a mass of original material calculated to throw light on the lives, experiences, and teachings of the mystics who flourished within these folds. No serious student of mysticism can afford to ignore this valuable literature. But what has prompted me to make a special and very comprehensive study of Indian literature is the fact that this literature has been, so far, very inadequately brought under critical study for a survey of the vast and enthralling field of *Indian mysticism*. The spirit of an *Indian* mystic, however modern, can be best and most correctly understood when it is seen presented in the light of the traditional Indian background, though it is undebatable that mysticism in its essence is the same everywhere and at all times and is never coloured by age, clime, or culture.

It has already been observed that mystic experience is of the nature of an immediate intuition of Reality, in which the senses and reasoning power either cease to function or function extraordinarily under a direct divine guidance. The immediacy is a practical affirmation

of the deep sense of affinity between the subject and the object; it also implies, in a negative way, a freedom from the binding relationship between the subject and the object, which persists in ordinary consciousness.

The highest experience is unique and defies all description, though, on a lower level, it lends itself to an infinite variety of modes of expression. The Reality which forms the content of this experience is in fact identical with it. So that what we have here is a unity of Reality (*sat*) and Experience (*cit*), revealing itself as Divine Felicity (*ānanda*) or Ineffable Peace.

The Transcendental Consciousness :

What is known as Cosmic Consciousness is an aspect of the Supreme Consciousness, which stretches beyond into the Transcendental Consciousness. It is a vision of the One in the Many and of the Many in the One—a vision in which the One and the Many appear at once as identical and as distinct. It is a vision again, in which neither the One nor even the Many appears; a vision indeed which is as good as no-vision — a state of consciousness or perhaps of clarified supra-consciousness in which light and darkness have no separate meaning. In referring to his state, the *Saṁvidullāsa Tantra* says :

udyogamayamālasyaṁ prakāśaikātmakaṁ tamaḥ .
aśūnyaṁ śūnyakalpaṁ ca tattvaṁ kimapi śāmbhavam ..

The above verse implies that the mystic condition which represents union with the Supreme Reality is verily inexpressible in human language; it is, or it appears to be, a strange combination of contradictory states. It may be described from one point of view as a state of great stress and strain (*udyogamayam*), whereas it may also appear as inaction (*ālasyam*). It appears as intense darkness (*tamaḥ*), though it is the purest light (*prakāśa*). One feels it as a great void (*śūnya-kalpam*), whereas it is also the Supreme Substance in which everything is revealed. It is thus, in its totality, a mysterious manifestation of the Supreme.

Abhinavagupta's View of the Highest Truth:

Abhinavagupta, a great mystic devotee of Kashmir, belonging to the 10th century A.D., has expressed this experience in his inimitable language in the following hymn addressed to the Divine Self.

He says :

prapañcottīrṇarūpāya namaste viśvamūrtaye .
sadānandaprakāśāya svātmane'nantaśaktaye ..
tvaṁ tvamevāhamevāhaṁ tvamevāsi na cāsmyaham .
ahaṁ tvamityubhau na sto yatra tasmai namo namaḥ ..
antardehe mayā nityaṁ tvamātmā ca gaveṣitaḥ .
na dṛṣṭastvaṁ nacaivātmā yacca dṛṣṭaṁ tvameva tat ..
bhavadbhaktasya sañjātabhavadrūpasya me'dhunā .
tvamātmarūpaṁ samprekṣya tubhyaṁ mahyaṁ namo namaḥ ..

ahaṁ tvaṁ tvamahaṁ ceti bhinnatā nāvayoḥ kvacit .
alaṁ bhedānukathayā tvadbhaktirasacarvaṇāt ..
tvatsvarūpe jṛmbhamāṇe tvaṁ cāhaṁ cākhilaṁ jagat .
jāte tasya tirodhāne na tvaṁ nāhaṁ vai jagat .. [1]

Thy essence is beyond the universe and yet the universe is Thy form.

Thou art my own self, the manifestation of infinite powers, all being, existence, joy and light eternal, to Thee I bow.

Thou art only Thyself, so am I myself; Thou alone art, I am not,

To Him I bow wherein neither Thou art nor I am.

I searched all the time for Thee and myself within me,

I saw there neither Thee nor me, and yet what I saw there was nothing but Thee.

I, Thy humble devotee, being now transfigured into Thy likeness,

I find Thee in the form of my own self and in bowing to myself, I really bow to Thee.

I am Thyself and Thou art myself, between us there is no veil of difference;

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1. Quoted from *Abhinavagupta* by K. C. Pandey, The Chowkhāmbā Saṁskrit Series Studies, Vol. I. p. 946. *Mahopadeśaviṁśatikam*, verses 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, and 9. The translations given are mine.

What to speak of difference? Having tasted the nectar of devotion to Thee, (it needs no assertion that) all this is really One.

When Thy Being shines, Thyself and myself, nay, the whole world, emerge into view,

But by His disappearances, behold: Thyself, myself, and the whole world vanish into nothingness.

Kabir, Dattātreya, Asaṅga, and Nāgārjuna on Mystic Experience :

The goal of a mystic is really indescribable in human language. It is beyond both the finite and the infinite.

Kabir says :

hadda calai so mānava vehadda calai so sādho .
hadda vehadda dau tajai tākai mata agādha ..

He is an ordinary man who treads the path of finitude, but a *sādhu* is one who follows the path of infinity.

It is impossible to fathom the wisdom of a man who has renounced both finitude and infinity.

This bears a close resemblance to the statement of Dattātreya in his *Avadhūta-Gītā* where it is said that the

highest truth is above the extremes of dualism and non-dualism.

He says :

advaitaṁ kecidicchanti dvaitamicchanti cāpare .
samaṁ tattvaṁ na vindanti dvaitādvaitavivarjitam ..[2]

Non-duality appeals to some, duality to others;
They are, however, far from the Truth which is the One, above both duality and non-duality.

In the same work we come across a vivid description of this ecstatic condition.

It says :

ātmaiva kevalaṁ sarvaṁ bhedābhedo na vidyate .
asti nāsti kathaṁ bruyāt vismayaḥ pratibhāti me ..[3]

The Self alone exists and is all, there exists neither difference nor non-difference.
It baffles me, difficult as it is to describe It as Being or even as Non-Being.

Again ,

ādimadhyāntamukto'haṁ na baddho'haṁ kadācana .
svabhāvanirmalaḥ śuddha iti me niścitā matiḥ ..[4]

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2. I. 36.
3. I. 9.
4. I. 44.

I am perfect freedom, the beginning, the middle, and the end; hence never am I in bondage;

I realise that by nature I am stainless.

Further on :

nirālambamaśūnyaṁ ca śūnyaṁ vyomādipañcakam ..[5]
na ṣaṇḍo na pumānna strī na bodha naiva kalpanā .
sānando vā nirānandamātmānaṁ manyase katham ..[6]

I require no prop to support me, I am both the void and the non-void, I am the elements.

I am neither male nor female nor a eunuch; I am neither pure consciousness nor imagination.

Dattātreya goes on to add :

na baddho naiva mukto'haṁ na cāhaṁ brahmaṇaḥ pṛthak .
na kartā na ca bhoktā'haṁ vyāpya-vyāpakavarjitaḥ ..[7]
prakṛtiṁ puruṣaṁ tadvadabhinnaṁ pratibhāti me .[8]
na gururnopadeśaśca na copādhirna ca kriyā .
videhaṁ gaganaṁ viddhi viśuddho'haṁ svabhāvataḥ ..[9]

5. I. 46.
6. I. 47.
7. I. 50.
8. I. 51.
9. I. 54.

I am never bound, not even unbound; I am not different from *Brahman*.

I do not act, nor claim the fruits of any action, I am neither the pervader nor the pervaded;

To me *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*, ego and non-ego, subject and object are one and the same.

For me there is no teacher, no limitation, no action;

I am bodiless like space and pure by nature.

It is interesting to trace the similarity between the above description and what Asaṅga, a Buddhist scholar-monk of the post-Buddha period, says in the following verse:

na san na cāsan na tathā na cānyathā .
na jāyate vyeti na cāvahīyate ..
na vardhate nāpi viśuddhate punaḥ .
viśuddhyate tat paramārtha-lakṣaṇam ..[10]

It is neither existent, nor non-existent; it is not what it may appear, it is not otherwise too;

Birth it has not, nor any decay or end;

No growth has it either, nor does it purify;

It is eternally pure, the seal of the Supreme Reality.

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10. Saṁskrit verse is quoted in Radhakrishnan's *The Brahma Sūtra*, p. 121.

Nāgārjuna declares :

anirodham, anutpādam, anucchedam, aśāśvatam .
anekārtham, anānārtham, anāgamam, anirgamam ..
na san nāsan na sad-asan na cāpy anubhayātmakam .
catuṣkoṭi-vinirmuktaṁ tattvaṁ mādhyamikā viduḥ ..[11]

It is irresistible, it cannot be originated, it is inseverable, it is eternally changing, it has infinite meanings yet its meaning is one, it is eternally present with neither any entrance nor any exit, it is neither existent nor non-existent; it is above all existence and non-existence. The wise pursuing the middle path know the Reality to be beyond the four categories.

Christian Mysticism :

We have had classical descriptions of the ecstatic state in the *Enneads* of Plotinus,[12] in the *Treatise on*

11. *Mādhyamika-Kārikā.*

12. Plotinus observes that ecstasy is the liberation of one's mind from finite consciousness. When a man ceases to be finite he becomes one with the Infinite. When the soul is reduced to its simplest self, its Divine essence, this Union or Identity is realised. He says that the abstract primal principle is above being and life, and is reached in its unity by the utmost simplification of nature. In the preliminary stage of exaltation the soul has a vision of the Beautiful on which he gazes intently, being blind to everything else. This contemplation glorifies the soul. But this vision of the Beautiful is not a vision of the unity which

Contemplation by Richard of St. Victor, in St. Teresa's works including her *Life*, *The Way of Perfection*, and *Castle of the Soul* (in which this condition is described as 'Prayer of Rapture'), in the Treatise on *Love of God* by St. Francis de Sales, and in numerous other literary sources. This state corresponds again to what St. John of the Cross would describe as 'The Dark Night of the Soul'.

Ṣūfī Mysticism:

Persian literature, both metaphysical and poetical, abounds in data, which may be used for the purpose of evolving a philosophy of mysticism. Mystic experiences of the *Ṣūfīs* and other Islāmic saints have often been carefully recorded, which indicates various types of such experiences. Reference may be made to an interesting account of the state of ecstasy preserved in Persian poetry. The experience relates to one Syed, the servant of the Prophet.

Syed says of himself:

My tongue clave fever-dry, my blood ran fire,
My nights were sleepless with consuming love,

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is absolute and partless. True vision is identification. So even this glorified Image of the Soul radiant with the transforming effulgence of Beauty has to be renounced, for it is the aspirant's individual self which needs be shunned. The next step is withdrawal into the Unity in which he becomes completely identified with the Infinite one.

Till night and day speed past, as flies a lance,
Grazing a buckler's reign, a hundred thousand years
No longer than a moment. In that hour
All past eternity and all to come
Was gathered up in one stupendous Now,
Let understanding marvel as it may,
Where men see clouds, on the ninth heaven I gaze,
And see the throne of God. All heaven and hell
Are bare to me and all men's destinies.
The heavens and earth, they vanish at my glance,
The dead rise at my look, I tear the veil
From all the worlds, and in the hall of heaven
I set me central, radiant as the sun.

Arjuna's Universal Vision and Buddha's Experience :

This vision reminds one of the apocalyptic vision of Arjuna as recorded in the *Gītā*,[13] obtained for a short while through the opening of his celestial eye (*divya-cakṣu*)[14] by Divine Grace, and of a similar

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13. Chapter XI.

14. The Mystic Vision as we find in ancient literature is of different kinds. The one referred to here is the vision revealed unto the Celestial Eye (*divya-cakṣu*) which was granted by Lord Kṛṣṇa to Arjuna in the battlefield of Kurukṣetra. The *divya-cakṣu* enabled Arjuna to have the vision of the Supreme Lord manifested in the human body of Kṛṣṇa. The *divya-cakṣu,* thus, enables one to have a direct perception of the majesty of the Cosmic

vision revealed to Gautama Buddha[15] just before the advent of his perfect Illumination. It is allied to the *vivekaja-jñāna*[16] of the *yogin* in the *viśokā*[17] stage of his spiritual enlightenment.

Self latent in an apparently human form such as Kṛṣṇa possessed. A revelation of the Real, through the ordinary human organs of perception, is rarely possible.

15. The Cosmic Vision which appeared to the Buddha and enabled him to become the Enlightened One was of another type, because it elevated him to observe the flux and instability in the world of becoming and at the same time observe the silent changeless One beyond the world of becoming. It was the 'Buddha Eye', again, which opened up before him the misery of the material world in the midst of the greatest affluence. This vision came to Gautama when he was just on the threshold of becoming the Lord Buddha. It took place after his victorious progress through the world of desire and through the world of pure light and super-light.

16. *Vivekaja-jñāna* is described in Patañjali's *Yoga-sūtra* as of the nature of purest intuition, originating from the *yogin*'s contact with the movement of moments (*kṣaṇas*) as distinguished from time (*kāla*). This highest kind of intuition stems from within and does not need any aid from external sources.

It is to be noticed here that *vivekaja-jñāna* is to be distinguished from *viveka-jñāna*, which is consciousness of the Self, as distinct from Nature and its modalities. *Vivekaja-jñāna* is, on the other hand, supreme knowledge, derived from a direct intuitive vision of a Moment, which leads to Supreme Power, as distinguished from *viveka-jñāna* or discriminating knowledge, which descends from a teacher to his disciple and is facilitated by continuous training and discipline.

17. In a literal translation, the term *viśokā* would mean 'freedom from afflictions'. According to Patañjali, this refers to a stage when the intellect (*buddhi*), after washing off the taints of *rajas* and *tamas*,

The Integral Nature of Reality :

The Reality with which the mystic consciousness is concerned may be conceived as the impersonal Absolute of philosophy, or as the personal God of religion, or as both in one. This Absolute, too, may be looked upon exclusively as Pure Being (*sat*) or Pure Consciousness (*cit*) or Infinite Delight (*ānanda*), or as the identity of Being, Consciousness, and Delight (*Saccidānanda*). It may also be conceived as Truth (*satyam*), Good (*śivam*), and Beauty (*sundaram*). Even as personal God, the Reality may be viewed in the light of human relationship as Father, Mother, Son, Daughter, Lover, Beloved, or Master, etc., or it may be viewed as beyond any such relationship. This relationship, too, may be a passing phase, a halting stage as it were, on one's way to Eternity, or it may be by itself the cardinal point in the Eternal Web of Life. God conceived under a personal name may be the manifested (*saguṇa*), whether with form (*sākāra*), or without form (*nirākāra*). God may be

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i.e., of the ills that flesh is heir to, shines in its own purity, like a crystal in the clear sunlight. The *yogin*'s mind, in this stage, becomes endowed with a new power and is able to gain an absolute command over everything. This commanding power emanates from his newly-gained knowledge of the distinction between the pure and perfected intellect (*buddhi-sattva*) and the *puruṣa*. In other words, it is a state in which the *guṇas* with all their objective and subjective forms appear before the mental gaze as it were like an endless and variegated procession. In this connection we come across the term *vivekaja-jñāna*, for which the word 'omniscience' is commonly substituted, which connotes a knowledge at once of all the pervading *guṇas* in their past, present,

unmanifested (*nirguṇa*) as well, but even as such He may be with or without form. But the great mystic experience may assume the form of a self-luminous Consciousness, poised in its own serenity and immutable sublimity; or as an Infinite Self-delight of Existence, being in truth, the Supreme fulfilment of Love Divine in which the Lover and the Beloved are in Eternal Union; or it may even appear as Peace and Silence Ineffable. The history of Indian mysticism, varied as it is, records illustrations of almost all the above categories of supra-mundane experiences of the mystics.

Four Visions of Reality according to Kaṭha Upaniṣad :

The vision of Reality, howsoever it appears to be, may differ according to the relative purity of the reflecting medium. The *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*[18] refers to four

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and future existence. This is thus another important milestone in this path. The stage of *viśokā* is reached *pari passu* with the attainment of this omniscience. The knower of the self has an inherent right to cross and leave behind the river of sorrow: *tarati śokam ātmavit*. The *yogin* at this stage, thus, not only acquires self-knowledge but gains a complete freedom from all pain and misery : *sarvajñātṛtvaṁ sarvātmanāṁ guṇānāṁ śāntoditāvyapadeśyadharmatvena vyavasthitānāmakramopāruḍhaṁ vivekajaṁ jñānamityarthaḥ. Ityeṣā viśokā nāma siddhiḥ yāṁ prāpya yogī sarvajñaḥ ksīnakleśabandhano vaśī viharati.*

Yoga-sūtra, III. 49.

18. *yathādarśe tathātmani, yathā svapne tathā pitṛloke.*
yathāpsu parīva dadṛśe, tathā gandharvaloke chāyātapayoriva brahmaloke..

II.3. 5.

such visions corresponding to the four degrees of the soul's progressive purity, and consistent with the four states in an ascending order.

These visions are explained through illustrative examples as follows :

(1) The first vision, viz., that of the mystic, who is still sense-bound, comes through the gateway of the purified senses and is unsubstantial, like the image in a mirror : *yathādarśe tathātmani*.

(2) So long as man is not altogether free from his association with the physical body, the vision will continue to be distorted. But as soon as, through the discipline of *yoga* or the ardour of devotion (*bhakti*), this association ceases and the soul is disentangled from the illusions of the senses, the vision becomes less shadowy and less defective and shows greater correspondence to the Reality. It is likened to the experience in a dream and the vision in the world of manes (*pitṛ-loka*) : *yathā svapne tathā pitṛ-loke*.

(3) On a higher level, however, the vision is still more clarified and transcends the nature of dream experience. The analogy of this vision may be drawn from one's catching sight of the pebbles at the bottom of a clear pool of water. It is not like reflection as in the first case, nor like a dream as in the next one; it is the vision of the Reality itself, though seen through a transparent screen and from some distance. The experience in the *gandharva-loka*, in the rarefied upper regions where the angels live, is cited as an illustration of this vision : *yathāpsu parīva dadṛśe tathā gandharva-loke*.

(4) In all these visions the Reality is not seen in its purity as dissociated from the unreal. But in the fourth vision, described as true and perfect, the Reality reveals itself in its essence, purged of all accidental properties. It is the normal experience in *brahma-loka,* which is the highest region of the elemental divinity, where consciousness is sublimated to its utmost purity and is converted into an immediate and blissful self-awareness. The perfect discrimination of the *yogin* in this condition is manifested in his ability of distinguishing the light from the shadow : *chāyātapayoriva brahma-loke*.

From the above description it is clear that the concrete visions of form, seen in the earlier stages of the mystic pursuit, are gradually superseded by the abstract visions of Truth in the later ones. Yet it may be added that in certain constitutions visions may not appear from the very beginning, and it does not in any way make the mystic's progress suspect. Visions are not the *sine qua non* in estimating the achievement of a mystic. Even in their absence there may have been a genuine communion with the Supreme.

We have classified, after the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad,* all visions popular in the Indian mystic traditions, under four categories, beginning with the initial vision, *i.e.,* of those that are sense-bound. A vision like this, which is amenable to the senses, belongs to the physical plane and is of the lowest kind. A physical vision is truly of the densest type and inspired by the external sense entities, or manifested inwardly under the impelling impact of elemental forces

(*bhautika saṁskāras*), centrally initiated in the system through association, etc. During such a vision the subject continues to be in physical consciousness, and more or less, the subject behaves abnormally. The density of mental disposition (*vāsanās*), which in the normal waking experience of an individual makes the world what it is, established in a sort of fixity, to some extent, gives way, during such a visitation.

The second stage marks a higher progress, because having these visions and being free from all physical bondage, the subject is no longer sense-bound. These visions represent a condition midway between the physical and the mental, and correspond in a sense to what is known as the 'astral' in theosophical literature. These belong more or less to the vital plane. The third state makes a greater approach to Reality, and the fourth still greater.

Suprasensory Experience :

The value of visions and auditions depends not so much on what is seen and heard, but on the degree of truth reflected in them. The senses and the mind cannot receive the truth without perverting it. Hence any truth which reveals itself through their media must be accepted with caution. But this is true in ordinary cases only. For both the senses and the mind may be purified and regenerated, and in that condition they are certainly capable of revealing the truth in a better manner, though only consistent with their capacity.

The mind-stuff itself consists of numerous grades, and the vision in one is necessarily different from that of another. Pure vision is supramental and supra-material. The auditions in the lower states have their analogy in the experience of listening to physical sounds. Though the former are heard apparently from within the body their sound is familiar to the hearer. These auditions should not be confused with the dictates of Conscience or Inner Voice. The Inner Voice is really a spiritual faculty producing certitude in knowledge, arising from knowledge itself, and is never falsified by subsequent experience.

The *yogins* speak of experiences through the exaltation of senses. These experiences are described as supranormal (*alaukika*), viz., the experience of celestial forms, sounds, odours, and so forth.[19]

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19. *tataḥ prātibha-śrāvaṇa-vedanā'darśā'svāda vārttā jāyante*, *i.e.*, thence (from the knowledge of *Puruṣa*) arise prescience (*prātibha*), supranormal power of hearing (*śrāvaṇa*), supranormal power of touch (*vedana*), supranormal power of sight (*ādarśa*), supranormal power of taste (*āsvāda*), and supranormal power of smell (*vārttā*). *Yoga-sūtra*, III. 36.

CHAPTER III

KĀVYA-RASA AND *BHAKTI-RASA*

Distinction between aesthetic joy (*kāvya-rasa*) and the delight of Brahman (*jñāna-rasa*) — Madhusūdana Sarasvatī's discrimination between *Bhakti-rasa* and worldly-*rasa*.

Distinction between Aesthetic Joy (Kāvya-Rasa) and the Delight of Brahman (Jñāna-Rasa):

Mystic experience, which is deeply related to aesthetic consciousness as described by the authorities on Indian Poetics (*alaṅkāra-śāstra*), is transcendent. The permanent, germinal mood (*sthāyī-bhāva*) which acts as the base of the mystic experience exists in the form of predisposition (*vāsanā*) in an individual subject, which is nothing but an aspect of the One Universal Subject—eternal and unlimited (*amita-pramātā*). This predisposition, under suitable circumstances, evolves into a state of joy (*ānanda*) experienced by the Universal Subject or Consciousness. The experience is made possible only when the limitations which constitute the individual subject or egoistic consciousness are rendered temporarily innocuous by certain forces. The experience is

essentially joyous, and continues so long as the exciting causes operate.

The uniqueness of aesthetic enjoyment is explained on the analogy of a cold and refreshing draught (*pānaka-rasa*), wherein the taste of each of the ingredients contributes to the flavour of the whole. It is neither a product which is caused (*kārya*) nor a phenomenon which is manifested (*jñāpya*), though, in a sense, it may be called both. It is self-revealed, although in it the exciting and other elements also appear as predominant contents. It is not accessible to determinate consciousness (*savikalpaka-jñāna*) nor even to indeterminate consciousness (*nirvikalpaka-jñāna*), and yet it appears to both. This shows its transcendent character.[1]

But mystic consciousness is to be differentiated from aesthetic enjoyment. Viśvanātha Kavirāja in his *Sāhitya Darpaṇa* describes *rasa* as akin to the delight of *Brahman* (*Brahmānanda*) experienced in the state of mystic transport, (*brahmāsvādasahodara*). He says :

sattvodrekādakhaṇḍasvaprakāśānandacinmayaḥ.
vedyāntarasparśaśūnyobrahmāsvādasahodaraḥ .. [2]

That is, *rasa* is born out of the predominance of *sattva,* and is integral, self-luminous, and conscious experience. It is different from all that is known through contact and is akin to the delight of *Brahman.*

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1. Mammaṭa : *Kāvyaprakāśa*, Chapter IV.
2. Chapter III. 2.

Ānandavardhana, the author of *Dhvanyāloka,* however, explicitly declares that both aesthetic joy (*kāvya-rasa*) and the Delight of *Brahman* (*jñāna-rasa*) are inferior to the Delight of *bhakti* (*bhakti-rasa*).

Madhusūdana Sarasvatī's Discrimination between Bhakti-Rasa and Worldly-Rasa :

Madhusūdana Sarasvatī too differentiates *bhakti-rasa* from the worldly-*rasa*, saying that although the ordinary artistic enjoyment is also one with the supreme and unique *ānanda* of *Brahman*, it does not appear so on account of the distracting and obscuring forces of *māyā*. In cases of worldly-*rasa*, he says, the object is *Brahman* indeed, but only as an unknown existence (*ajñāta-sattā*). It is the Universal Consciousness limited by specific objects (*kāntā* etc.). The means of illumination is the ordinary instrument of cognition which makes known these objects till then unknown (*ajñāta-jñāpaka*). This means produces an immediate consciousness in the shape of *sāttvika* function in the mind, which in its turn dispels the obscuring forces of *māyā*, whereupon *Brahman* shines in consciousness as limited by the objects concerned. The joy of ordinary *rasa* is decidedly inferior to the joy of *bhakti-rasa*.[3]

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3. Ānandavardhana, long before the advent of Abhinavagupta, speaks of joy of *bhakti* as superior to the pleasure of ordinary poetic *rasa*. But he does not mention *bhakti-rasa* as such. The later rhetoricians of Kashmir explicitly maintain that *rati* directed towards *gods* can rise up to the aesthetic level (*rasa*). If *bhakti* and

The worldy asthetic sense is only a faint semblance of the transcendental mystic consciousness. Poetic inspirations, even of the highest order, cannot soar above this lower aesthesis for the simple reason that the emotion in this case cannot be properly sublimated, owing to a lack of moral purity behind it and lack of a sufficient upward urge. Mystic experience of the right type is the cause, and sometimes the effect, of a wholesale transformation of the being, a spiritual conversion, whereas the normal aesthetic intuition entails no such radical change in the substance of the subject concerned. Hence a great poet by virtue of his genius and inspiration may be mystical, but not a mystic. As with poetry, so with music and other kinds of fine arts.

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such *rati* are synonymous, it is evident that in their opinion there is no such thing as *bhakti-rasa*, in spite of the fact that the *Śiva-stotrāvalī* of Utpalācārya, the great Kashmiri *Śaiva* saint-philosopher, implies its existence.

The Vaiṣṇava Poetics of Medieval Bengal, apparently under the influence of Caitanya's teachings, recognised *bhakti* as a *rasa*. The works of Rūpa Gosvāmin, Jīva Gosvāmin, Kavi Karṇapūra, Baladeva, and others would bear ample testimony to this fact. Madhusūdana and Nārāyaṇa also admit *bhakti-rasa*. Nārada in his *Bhakti-sūtras* says plainly that *bhakti* is an end in itself (*phala-svarūpā*), and not a means to an end. It is also described by him as *amṛtasvarūpā*, *i.e.*, of the nature of nectar.

CHAPTER IV

GRACE AND *SĀDHANĀ*

1

Grace and desire for union with God — Sudden nature of Grace — Self-realisation not possible through intellectual pursuit — Adoption of some means is the general rule; views of Sāṁkhya, Vedānta, and Tantra.

2

Different 'Ways' and 'Means' according to the scriptures — Nature of the goal; two views: goal same, means different and goal different, means different — Gradation of *jñāna, karma*, and *bhakti*—Divine Realisation.

1

Grace and Desire for Union with God:

The mystic path, or for that matter all religious paths, holds and pursues the ideal of the expansion and elevation of the human consciousness to a level where an active contact with the Divine Reality can be established. The path in each system is different. Each system prescribes its own discipline for those that are within its fold. Yet, with all their varying paths, the

systems agree on the certainty and validity of grace which opens up the seeker's intuitive vision for a full realisation of the divine bliss. The concept of grace is thus of cardinal importance and is required to be clearly understood in a study of mysticism, which by its very nature lays the strongest emphasis on grace. This is doubly necessary because the way to grace varies from mystic to mystic, and in a profound manner highlights the uniqueness of a particular mystic experience.

How can the contact with Reality be established ? How can the soul which is involved in the dross of the ephemeral world regain its pristine purity, and realise its oneness with the Divine ? Can it be achieved by any means to which the human soul has access, or is it exclusively through the divine grace over which human soul has no control ? A glance at the history of mysticism would clearly show that there is no hard and fast rule in this regard, though the supremacy of God's redeeming grace is realised and accepted everywhere. Dattātreya's statement that it is through the heavenly grace (*śaktipāta*) that the desire for union with the Absolute Being arises in the mind, is corroborated by the entire sacred literature of the world.

Sudden Nature of Grace :

We know of the experiences of individual mystics in which the shower of Grace in all its plenitude is found to be as sudden as it is inexplicable. Human

nature being infinitely complex and richly varied, each such experience is necessarily unique in character. All these experiences cannot be brought under a common formula. St. Paul, whose life was reclaimed by Christ by a sudden illumination bears resemblance in some respects to that of the two notorious rogues Jagāi and Mādhāi on whom Caitanya unexpectedly poured his compassion in abundance. But each experience has its own peculiarity. A sudden onrush of divine mercy upon persons of ill-repute cannot be satisfactorily explained on the basis of their present lives. It can be due only to the flash-like spontaneous nature of Divine Love. There is no doubt, as is shown in the experiences referred to above, that there is also such a thing as free and unconditional grace of the Divine. The unlimited compassion of Buddha and even of the Bodhisattvas may be classed under this head by way of comparison. Christ's self-sacrifice on the Cross, to redeem mankind guilty of the original sin, is another glowing example of the boundless and spontaneous grace of God.

Self-realisation not Possible through Intellectual Pursuit :

The *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* declares :

nāyamātmā pravacanena labhyo
na medhayā na bahunā śrutena
yamevaiṣa vṛṇute tena labhyas-
tasyaiṣa ātmā vivṛṇute tanūṁ svām.[1]

1. *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, I. 2. 23.

> Neither by eloquence, nor through intellect, nor by great learning can the knowledge of the Self be obtained. It can be realised only by him whom He favours and to whom He reveals Himself.

This is technically known as the 'pathless path' (*anupāya-mārga*). Hence it is presupposed that the various accredited means of Divine Realisation are not required and yet the realisation is perfectly accomplished by God's fathomless beatitude and His concern for our redemption. Self-realisation taking place through God's grace may not require even a word of guidance (the so-called 'Substantial Word' of St. John of the Cross, or the *sāra-śabda* of Kabir) from the wise and the realised souls. Thus it is due to grace flowing out in all its potency and plenitude that all the paraphernalia of external means, the various rituals and practices become absolutely superfluous.

Adoption of Some Means Is the General Rule; Views of Sāṁkhya, Vedānta, and Tantra :

Grace by its very nature is fortuitous. The moments of grace are rare, and those who receive it are really very few. Hence it can never be considered as a general rule. In normal cases, the general rule is that some means consistent with the exact nature of the End, and within the spiritual capacity of the aspirant seeking after it, have to be adopted. For instance, the End in Sāṁkhya-Yoga is *kaivalya*—a state of purification of the individual soul to its highest degree, and its

freedom from the action of Nature or *guṇas*. This End can be reached by a progressive abstraction of the soul from the senses and the mind. The highest state of purity obtained progressively marks the illumination which consummates in the subsequent analysis of the Light of Gnosis into its component elements of Being (*sattva*) and Consciousness. Consciousness (*puruṣa*) being thus released from Nature (*prakṛti*) rests in itself steady and serene. If the Ideal, however, is conceived as impersonal absorption in the Universal Self, as in Vedānta, it can be attained by a life of faith, moral discipline, detachment, etc., followed by an intellectual intuition of the unity of the individual with the universal Pure Self. The condition antecedent to this state of oneness is the elimination of the differentiating accidental qualities associated with the two. This intuition originates from the Sacred Word proceeding from the mouth of the *guru* : *ācāryavān puruṣo veda*.[2] The Word is charged with all the authority of his personal conviction, is based on realisation and is aided during its emergence by reason and contemplation.

The Tāntrika would, however, say that in none of the above mentioned states, could Perfection be attained. To a Tāntrika, Perfection implies a harmonious re-awakening and development of all the attributes and potentialities of the Self, including absolute Will (*icchā*), Knowledge (*jñāna*), and Action (*kriyā*), which constitute the Divinity of the Self, and which latently manifest themselves in the individual self. The self is divine by

2. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, VI. 14. 2.

nature, and must regain its natural state through the evolution of its supreme power which lies dormant in it. In the eyes of the Tāntrikas neither the Sāṁkhya nor the Vedānta ideals fulfil the aspiration for Divine Life, which a seeker after Perfection feels in his inmost heart. To a Tāntrika, even the glory of Brahmic Consciousness (*Brahmajñāna*), as understood in the non-dualist (*advaita*) school of Vedānta, does not appeal since it is seen only as a slight extension of the *kaivalya* of Sāṁkhya. The Tāntrika thus invokes the Divine Power to divinise the human soul and bring it in its transformed condition into alliance with the Eternal Divine Essence. The methods followed by the seeker to realise this Ideal are, therefore, of a different nature from those pursued for the other Ideals already referred to at the outset in this chapter.

2

Different 'Ways' and 'Means' according to the Scriptures :

For the realisation of the Ideal there are different ways prescribed in the Indian religious literature. The variety is purposive of the desire to cater for people of diverse nature and temperaments. A comprehensive survey of the vast literature bearing on this is neither necessary nor even possible within the framework of the present work. All that can be justifiably attempted in this connection is a cursory glance at the salient features of only a selection of the 'Ways' (*mārga*) and the 'Means' (*upāya*) concerning the goal of Self-realisation.

These ways may be considered from two different points of view. First, the ways may be regarded as mutually independent, each being viewed as a distinct path, complete and sufficient in itself for the purpose of the realisation of the goal. Secondly, the ways may be considered inter-related, so that the position of each in relation to the others is already determined, not only in an order of logical sequence but in practical life as a series of progressive stages, arranged in the manner of the rungs of a ladder.

Nature of the Goal; Two Views : Goal Same, Means Different, and Goal Different, Means Different :

Before dealing with each of the above means separately from the first point of view, it will be necessary to answer some relevant questions. The first question which arises in this connection is in regard to the nature of the goal to which the particular means is supposed to lead. There is the view that though the means are different, the End sought to be reached and realised is always one and the same. The classical expression of this idea is found in the following beautiful lines of Puṣpadanta's *Śiva-mahimna-stotra* :

> *trayī sāṁkhyaṁ yogoḥ paśupatimataṁ vaiṣṇavamiti.*
> *prabhinne prasthāne paramidamadaḥ pathyamiti ca* :
> *rucīnāṁ vaicitryādṛjukuṭilanānāpathajuṣām.*
> *nṛṇāmeko gamyastvamasi payasāmarṇava iva* ..[3]

3. *Śiva-mahimna-stotra*, 7.

Madhusūdana Sarasvatī, the great Vedāntic scholar of the

> The triple Veda, Sāṁkhya, Yoga, the Paśupati doctrine, and the Vaiṣṇava doctrine — among these differing paths, one is as good as any of the others. For men who resort to different paths, some straight or others crooked, due to the varying individual tastes, reach but Thee (O Lord !), just as the rivers flow on to the ocean.

This seems to show that every path leads to the same supreme Blessedness, and that no path is intrinsically superior or inferior to any one of the rest. Choice of path is, therefore, determined by the genuine qualifications of the seeker in question and not by any inherent quality in the path itself.

The other view, however, is that the path is graded. Even this gradation is of a varying nature according to the seeker's own conception of the goal. By way of illustration, we may cite here a few leading opinions. Sarvajñātmā, the author of *Saṁkṣepa-śārīraka* says that it is possible to rise up to a higher level from the lower level which forms the base at all progressive stages : *āruhya bhūmimadharāmitarādhiroḍhuṁ śakya.*[4] Hence one's planting oneself firm on each level of experience is essential as a means to the attainment of the next higher level. Judged in the light of this principle, the

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16th century, has devoted a special section in his commentary on the hymn to an examination of the idea contained in the portion quoted above. This section of the commentary has often been published as a separate tract since the days of Dr. Weber, who brought it out, exclusively but elaborately, under the caption of *Prasthānabheda* in the pages of the *Indische Studien*.

4. II. 60.

views of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, Sāṁkhya-Yoga, and Vedānta are said to form a regular pyramidical structure, with Vedānta at the apex. Madhusūdana Sarasvatī clearly says in the *Prasthānabheda* that the different philosophical views represent so many steps, as it were to reach the acme of realisation as taught by the philosophy of Vedānta.

Gradation of Jñāna, Karma, and Bhakti — Divine Realisation:

Similarly, regarding the relation of knowledge (*jñāna*) with action (*karma*) and devotion (*bhakti*), it is affirmed that action, if disinterested, leads to mental purification (*citta-śuddhi*) and then through devotion to redeeming knowledge. The devotee, on the other hand, regards devotion (*bhakti*) as the immediate antecedent of liberation, action, and knowledge being considered nothing but mere ancillaries. Thus the Vaiṣṇavas hold that *karma* and *jñāna*, practised as aids to *bhakti-yoga* or *dhyāna*, only purify the mind; while *bhakti-yoga* in its perfected condition leads to *parā-bhakti*, which is of the nature of a supremely joyous intuition. *Parā-bhakti* is a means to *para-jñāna* or the vision of the Divinity. After the attainment of Divine Vision, the same *parā-bhakti* continues to work until the divinisation of the released soul is complete.

The dualist school of Madhvācārya too has its own scheme of spiritual evolution. This school maintains that the most important achievement of one's spiritual existence is the Vision of God, which follows on the

I–7 (45/2/125–72)

removal of the dark veil standing in the way of the mind. Listening to the divine glories and His infinite blissful qualities, meditating constantly on them, and deep contemplation — these three propitiate God and through His grace lead to the Supreme Vision.

Remembering that the Vision of God comes in different ways to different individuals, let us consider those to whom love (*rati*) for the Divine alone sustains and guides. This love in the seeker's heart develops into an unceasing flow of sweetness and bliss reaching the stage of supreme love (*paramā-bhakti*). It brings in its wake God's special grace, which effects emancipation of the soul from the shackles of *prakṛti* and its three *guṇas*, of the *karmas* (except the *prārabdhas*), and of the subtle body. The *prārabdha karmas* persist but are finally exhausted through experience. The body then falls off and the soul rises up through the *suṣumnā*, leaving the body along the path of the *brahmarandhra* and ascending through a series of celestial spheres into the kingdom of God.

In the *Caitanya Caritāmṛta* one comes across a dialogue between Rāya Rāmānanda and Caitanya on the nature of the progressive states of the spiritual ascent. The states as described by the great teacher are in the following order :

a) *Karma* (as enjoined by one's station in life);

b) *Jñāna*;

c) *Jñāna* with *bhakti*;

d) *Bhakti* with *jñāna*; and

e) Pure *bhakti* in its different stages.

The Śaiva Āgamas, popular in ancient Kashmir, state that the Beatific State represents the highest perfection which a man is capable of attaining, the goals set forth in the other Indian systems (*śāstras*) being just so many stepping stones on the real path.

Apropos of salvation, we have a clear confirmation in other celebrated scriptures. In the *Bhāgavata*[5] it is affirmed that the *yogin* who aspires after immediate salvation (*sadyo-mukti*) subsequent to physical death, has to follow a course similar to what is prescribed in the *Gītā*,[6] in the *Svacchanda Tantra*, and other works of the same type. But if he seeks to have a progressive mode of salvation (*krama-mukti*) through a series of intermediate and graded celestial planes of blissful experience, he pursues a path (also described in the *Bhāgavata*),[7] which leads to *brahma-loka*. Śrīdhara observes that there are three possible alternatives before the *yogins* who find themselves in *brahma-loka*, described as follows :

a) If the *yogins* reach *brahma-loka* on account of a meritorious life lived on earth (*puṇyotkarṣa*), they are not released, but enjoy all the pleasures of the highest heaven, and at the beginning of a new cosmic cycle (*kalpāntare*) become invested with the administrative powers of the universe (*ādhikārika*). This pre-

5. II. 2. 19. 21.
6. VIII. 9-13.
7. II. 2. 22. 27.

rogative, they go on enjoying so long as their auspicious *prārabdhas* are not exhausted.

b) If, however, the *yogins* reach the *brahma-loka* on account of their meditation (*upāsanā*) of *Hiraṇya-garbha* or *Brahmā*, they are released with the release of *Brahmā* at the end of their current world cycle.

c) But if the aspirant is a devotee of the Supreme Lord (*Bhagavad-upāsaka*), and reaches the *brahma-loka* in course of his graded upward journey, he has not to be an *ādhikārika* in the next cycle and then released, nor even to wait till the end of the world cycle of *Brahmā* for his release. It will be by his mere will that he will transcend the *brahma-loka* and reach the Divine Essence (*Parama-pada*).

Chapter V

THE PATH OF ACTION AND THE PATH OF *YOGA*

1

The path of Action — *Karma-yoga* distinguished from *Kriyā-yoga*.

2

The path of *Yoga* : Meaning of the term '*Yoga*' — Moral disciplines in *Yoga* according to Patañjali — Four stages of spiritual progress according to *Yoga* : (*I*) *Prathamakalpika,* (*II*) *Madhumatībhūmika,* (*III*) *Prajñājyotiḥ* or *Bhūtendriyajayī* — The eightfold *siddhis* (*aṣṭa-siddhis*) : (*i*) *aṇimā,* (*ii*) *laghimā,* (*iii*) *mahimā,* (*iv*) *prāpti,* (*v*) *prākāmya,* (*vi*) *vaśitva,* (*vii*) *īśitṛtva, and* (*viii*) *yatrakāmāvaśāyitva* — Three more Powers : (*i*) *manojavītva,* (*ii*) *vikaraṇabhāva, and* (*iii*) *pradhānajaya* — (*IV*) *Atikrāntabhāvanīya*.

3

Kuṇḍalinī-yoga.

1

The Path of Action :

The path of action (*karma*) leading to the soul's emancipation is celebrated in the great Indian scriptures, showing how, in a down-to-earth manner, a

harmony was effected between the mundane existence and the highest empyrean of divine bliss. The *Gītā* provides the example : *karmaṇaiva hi saṁsiddhimāsthitā janakādayaḥ*,[1] that is, Janaka and others of his type obtained salvation (*siddhi*) by means of action.

Action in this context is to be understood in the sense of duties performed in a disinterested manner, completely regardless of the fruits thereof. The concept of *karma-yoga* as inculcated in the *Gītā* is to be distinguished from the ritualistic doctrine usually associated with the school of Mīmāṁsā. *Karma* as adumbrated in the *Gītā* charts out a clear line of approach to the Divine (*yoga*) in His dynamic aspect. Action done from a sense of devotion to duty and without any desire for the fruits thereof tends, on the one hand, to purify the mind and keep it free from the entanglements incidental to a life of action, and on the other, to be a form of real service to the world. According to the law of causality every *karma* must bear its fruits; but if the agent is free from any attachment to them and makes no claim to them, the *karmas* do not bear any fruit for him. Good actions contribute to an amelioration, uplift, and betterment of the world. The *karma-yogin* as such is a conscious and

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1. III. 20.

In the *Buddha Carita* of Aśvaghoṣa (Ch. XIV), on the other hand, Janaka like Parāśara is described as a follower of Sāṁkhya. But in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, he appears certainly to have been a Vedāntin. The cumulative evidence of Indian historical tradition is in support of this view. The *Mahābhārata*, too, seems to show that he was a *jñānin* rather than a *karmin*.

voluntary co-worker with God in His world-ministration. Being detached from the results of the action and maintaining a quiet equanimity in success and failure, his purity of mind and qualification for *mokṣa* are established. The distinction of *karma-yoga* is that it is action with its advantages but free from its defects. The *Gītā* gives us the well-known paradox :

> *karmaṇyakarma yaḥ paśyedakarmaṇi ca karma yaḥ.*
> *sa buddhimān manuṣyeṣu sa yuktaḥ kṛtsnakarmakṛt..*[2]
>
> He, who sees action in inaction, and inaction in action, is wise among men; he is a *yogin* who has accomplished the integral action.

The words *paśyet* and *kṛtsna-karmakṛt* in the above excerpt deserve special attention inasmuch as they highlight the *karma-yogin*'s claim of superiority over the others. He has the double vision of actionlessness in action and action in actionlessness tantamount to the performance of an integral action, than which nothing is better.

Karma-yoga Distinguished from Kriyā-yoga :

The idea of *karma-yoga* is partially synonymous with the idea of *kriyā-yoga* set forth by Patañjali.[3] It implies austerity (*tapaḥ*), sacred studies, or repetition of the sacred *mantras* (*svādhyāya*), and a complete surrender of all action and their fruits to the Supreme Teacher.

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2. IV. 18.
3. *Yoga-sūtra,* II. 1.

In the light of this concept, *kriyā-yoga* is that superior action which paves the way to *yoga*, the above aspects of it being alternately the curbs and spurs both to neutralise the seeds of afflictive action and to provide moral and spiritual energy to the *yogin*. The *kriyā-yoga* puts the emphasis on an ideal concentration (*samādhi*) and attenuation of the impurities brought about by the listlessness of man and the dullness of his sense-organs (*kleśas*). Along the path of *kriyā-yoga*, man's self-knowledge (*prasaṁkhyāna*), knowledge of truth (*samprajñāna*), and discriminative knowledge (*viveka*) are roused into a noble purifying activity. These prepare the *yogin*, now calm with all passions spent, for the final realisation (*īśvara-praṇidhāna*).

The practice of *kriyā-yoga* thus helps to reduce ignorance and the other afflictions (*kleśas*) of mundane life to a rarefied condition and prepare the mind for concentration (*samādhi*). The *kleśas* thus rarefied are sterilised under the action of knowledge derived from *samādhi* and become incapable of giving rise to worldly consciousness.[4]

2

The Path of Yoga : Meaning of the Term 'Yoga' :

Of all the means of Self-realisation the path of *Yoga* is one of the most important. The affirmations of Yājñavalkya : *ayaṁ tu paramo dharmaḥ yad yogenātma-darśanam*, that which through the practice of *yoga* leads to

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4. *Yoga-sūtra,* III. 50 ; IV. 29, 30.

Self-realisation is alone the supreme spiritual discipline and *nāsti yogasamaṁ balam, i.e.*, there is no power other than that of *yoga*, bear this out clearly. But what is the meaning of the term '*Yoga*' ? Semantically the term may mean both concentration and contemplation, implying *samādhi* and union or unification. The Indian philosophico-religious literature contains detailed accounts of the various forms of *yoga* with which of course we are not concerned in our present pursuit. We find, for instance, accounts of *rāja-yoga, rājādhirāja-yoga, mahā-yoga, śūnya-yoga, siddha-yoga, mantra-yoga, laya-yoga, haṭha-yoga, nāda-yoga*, and others. Every form has its unique methods and proceeds from its own point of view. Looking closely into these varieties, however, one would find a common ground of approach.

'*Yoga*' etymologically means 'union' or 'communion'. But perplexing though it may appear, it attempts at the establishment of true identity through a state of isolation (*kaivalya*). It entails a progressive process of dissociation — a gradual and steady weaning away of the Self (*puruṣa*) from Nature with her three modalities (*prakṛti* with the *guṇas* : *sattva, rajas*, and *tamas*), until the latter is shorn of its distinctness as an entity and converges entirely in the former. The consummation of the process is reached in the emergence of the Pure Self serenely poised. It is a state established on the foundation of the complete dissociation of *puruṣa* from *prakṛti*.

Whether we conceive *yoga* as the suspension of mental and vital functions, in consequence of which the Self shines in its own light as the witness of the play

of *guṇas*, or as a self-revealing conscious Being, or interpret it as the union of individual self (*jīvātman*) and Universal Self (*paramātman*), (presupposing a corresponding union on the lower planes of existence between the mind and the individual self, between the senses and the mind, and between the object and the senses), the basic idea of abstraction from the world of matter and mind and from their activities is the establishment of the self in its transcendent purity, which makes communion with God possible.

Moral Disciplines in Yoga according to Patañjali :

Patañjali's system presupposes a course of moral discipline for a *yogin* who has set forth for himself the path of Self-realisation. The 'posture' (*āsana*) produces steadiness of body, the 'breath control' (*prāṇāyāma*) causes equipoise of vital activities, and the 'withdrawal' (*pratyāhāra*) leads to dissociation of the senses from their objects and of the mind from the senses. This practice when firmly established keeps the mind out of touch with the external world. The next course is intended to make the mind more and more placid till its activities are all held in abeyance, and being perfectly purified, it almost disappears altogether. The *Ātman* (*puruṣa*) then reveals itself in its own light.

Four Stages of Spiritual Progress according to Yoga :

It is time, perhaps, to pause a moment to see what stages the *yogins* who have reached the stage of

samādhi pass through, as pointed out by classical exponents. A survey of the stages will surely supplement our discussion about the nature of the *yogic* discipline. Vyāsa in his commentaries on *Yoga-sūtra* finds four successive stages of the spiritual progress as follows :—

(*I*) *Prathamakalpika* :

The first stage called *prathamakalpika* occurs when the process of illumination has just started (*pravṛttamātrajyotiḥ*). The light owes its origin to the continued practice of *samādhi*. In this stage the sense of the supernatural is aroused. The *yogin* who is in the midst of this period is yet a mere practitioner, though the manifestation of the inner light brings within his reach certain extraordinary and supersensuous phenomena. Ability to read others' thoughts, perception of distant objects as if they were no more distant than one's own hand, *e.g.*, clairvoyance, clairaudience, etc., as direct and clear knowledge of the past and the future as that of the present, and similar extraordinary powers of superperception accrue to a *yogin* in this initial period of his spiritual evolution. But the assumption of such power is only intermittent and occasional and is not a permanent feature. In the same way, visions of gods and goddesses, of angels and *siddhas*, of strange scenes of distant worlds and past lives flash at times before the *yogin*, giving him the assurance that he has turned a revolutionary leaf in his spiri-

tual life and that the prospects ahead are really glorious.

(*II*) *Madhumatībhūmika* :

This is the second stage. It marks a clear progress from the first and is ushered in just as there is the dawning of the clarified intuition called *ṛtambharā-prajñā*. The mind of the *yogin* now has a vision of unalloyed truth and is never affected by error. This intuition cannot come so long as the objective *samādhi* has a hold upon the *yogin* and has not been perfected through an emancipation from the material objectives. It has been already observed that the *samādhi* may have for its support either a gross, material substance or a subtle element. It is illimitable either on the side of greatness or on the side of minuteness. Nothing exists in nature to which the mind of the *yogin* cannot be directed. The subtle and the supersensuous object in nature consists of the atoms (which truly speaking are the rudimentary bases, described as *tanmātras* of the atoms), *e.g.*, the ego, the pure *liṅga*, and the ultimate *guṇas*. *Madhumatībhūmika* is a period of critical test in the life of a *yogin*, when he is liable to be led astray by the conceit or by the snares of attachment. The *yogin* at this stage passes beyond the initial state of illumination but has yet to gain a full control and mastery over the senses and the elements. The visits of the celestial beings, of angels, fairies, gods, etc., to which there are copious references in the biographies of the mys-

tics, are evidently of common occurrence during this time. There may be great temptations or even dire threats to make the *yogin* deflect from his path, but the *yogin,* even though he is not yet fully steady in his position, has to exercise the utmost strength of his judgement and purpose and spurn all such impediments. It is to be noted that this second period of a *yogin*'s life represents remarkable purity (*śuddhi*). The greater the purity the stronger are the temptations. At this stage, however, there is no gaining of any powers.

(*III*) *Prajñājyotiḥ or Bhūtendriyajayī* :

The third stage, called *prajñājyotiḥ* or *bhūtendriya-jayī* brings about the achievements of a complete mastery of the elements and the five senses — a mastery which gives the *yogin* control over the forces of nature in its three aspects — creative, preservative, and destructive. The domination over the five primordial elements (*pañca-bhūta*) and the ability to use them at will produces in the mind the well-known eight psychic powers (*aṣṭa-siddhi*) and also tends to invest the body with a new beauty and durability. The elements are each endowed with five aspects which require to be mastered in a progressive manner. It will be trite to dilate upon the commonly known first and the grossest aspect (*sthūla*) comprising the world of sense-perception, which it is well-nigh impossible for an ordinary man to transcend. The next form of the elements called *svarūpa* is of a more general nature. Hence it is

not easily perceivable in a distinct manner except through logical abstraction. This stage then lifts the *yogin* up beyond the reach of the celestial visitations to the light of *Prajñā* (*prajñājyotiḥ*). Having mastered the five degrees of elements and senses, the *yogin* obtains control over them.

The Eightfold Powers (*aṣṭa-siddhi*) :

The eight well-known *siddhis* (*aṣṭa-siddhi*), viz., (*i*) *aṇimā*, (*ii*) *laghimā*, (*iii*) *mahimā*, (*iv*) *prāpti*, (*v*) *prākāmya*, (*vi*) *vaśitva*, (*vii*) *īśitṛtva*, and (*viii*) *yatrakāmāvaśāyitva* are achieved. They are described as follows :

(*i*) *Aṇimā* :

It is minification. When a *yogin* is capable of commanding the lowest and grossest form of matter, he is able to reduce his body to any size and dimension he likes, even to that of an atom (*aṇu*).

(*ii*) *Laghimā* :

It is lightness. The *yogin* by attaining this power can decrease the weight of his body, can attain to extreme levitation, and is capable of flying through space without being affected by the force of gravitation.

(*iii*) *Mahimā* :

It is largeness. On the mastery of this power the *yogin* can increase the size and stature of his body to a size as large as the universe.

(*iv*) *Prāpti* :

It is attainment. To a *yogin* real distance is obliterated. He is capable of touching things even from a great distance. It is an attainment by which he can touch the moon by his fingertips, as it were.

(*v*) *Prākāmya* :

It is irresistible will. With this power, the *yogin* becomes immune from being affected by the generic properties of substance. This power enables him to go through solid blocks of stone, etc., as if going into water, without any resistance from the earth.

(*vi*) *Vaśitva* :

It is mastery or control. By this power, the *yogin* has control or mastery over the elements (*bhūtas*) which are *tanmātric* in nature, *i.e.*, the causal form of the physical world. The *yogin* has the mastery of transformation and transmutation of any substance.

(*vii*) *Īśitṛtva* :

It is mastery by which the *yogin* is able to control the appearance, disappearance, aggregation, and conglomeration of all the *bhūtas* and objects made thereof. He is able to command the origin and destruction of all the elements (*bhūtas*) and their products.

(*viii*) *Yatrakāmāvaśāyitva* :

It is resolution, the greatest power, by which he can determine at will the *bhūtas* and their nature, etc., as he desires. It is the supreme efficiency of his will and desire with which he can arrange the nature of the *bhūtas*. The *yogin* has the mastery of this power which is derived from his control over the highest form of matter (*arthavattva*).

But the *yogins* endowed with these powers do not usually utilise them, lest they incur a spiritual fall.

Three More Powers :

Three more powers called *madhumatī-pratīka* follow from the attainment of the above eightfold *siddhis* as a matter of course. These three powers are described as follows :

(1) *Manojavitva* :

In this stage the body acquires the velocity of the mind as the *yogin* has full control over his senses.

(2) *Vikaraṇabhāva* :

It is action of the sense-organs apart from the body. In this stage the *yogin* is capable of acting on the desired object without the necessity of the presence of the body. This non-instrumental nature of the sense-organs, capable of functioning independently of the body, enables the *yogin* to act on an object however separated by the remoteness of space and time.

(3) *Pradhānajaya* :

It is mastery over the Primordial Nature. It is in a sense mastery over and subjugation of constituent cause and its modification. The *yogin* is now the master of all the emanations of Nature.

But the *yogin* has yet to attain the highest state (*siddhi*) called *viśokā*, which marks the culmination of Lordship and consists of Omniscience and Omnipotence. The *yogin* attains this state when his mind is full of discriminative discernment (*viveka-jñāna*). The perfection in this state comes when the mind of the

yogin is raised to the status of greatest purity and steadiness. He is then truly a master (*vaśī*). In this stage he has the simultaneous knowledge of all pervading *guṇas* in their past, present, and future. The *yogin* achieves a state like the Almighty God (*īśvara*) — a state, all-knowing, all-powerful, and free from all afflictions, *e.g.*, ignorance, egoism, desire, aversion, and fear of self-annihilation : *yāṁ prāpya yogī sarvajñaḥ kṣīṇakleśabandhano vaśī viharati.*[5]

(*IV*) *Atikrāntabhāvanīya* :

The fourth or the last stage represents a spiritual condition when the *yogin* transcends even the supreme *viśokā* stage and the Lordship of his nature, and has had a vision of the Self. In this stage the mind is no longer operative and all powers like omniscience (*sarvajñatva*) disappear. This is beyond any worldly manifestation — a state unmanifested and imperceivable. It is a state of complete cessation (*nirodha*) of the mental modifications (*citta-vṛtti*) — a state of supreme non-attachment from the *guṇas*. This is a state of isolation or *kaivalya* — a state of *jīvanmukti* proper, seen from the point of view of *yoga* in which the Self shines in the absolute purity attained in a *samprajñāta samādhi*.

5. *Yoga-sūtra*, III. 49.

3

Kuṇḍalinī-yoga :

The method of *kuṇḍalinī-yoga,* as preached and elaborated in the literature on *haṭha-yoga* produced by the Nāthas, and in the Tantras, is of course different from the methods associated with the four categories of *yogins* mentioned above. Even a bare outline of the method is sufficient to give the reader a rare thrill, inasmuch as the rationale is equally revealing and thrilling. We feel as if the door which had shut off the mysteries of our inner life from us had been suddenly opened and a wonderful prospect, about which we had little idea before, had been laid bare before us. The whole thing may be summed up thus. The serpentine power lies dormant in a coiled form in the lowest bodily centre. Until this power is roused into activity from its slumber, it is not possible to have spiritual vision at all. The normal life of a man, with all its medley of activities, is nothing more than a flitting dream in which truth never reveals itself to him. It is a phantasmagoria of illusions flitting across the eyes of a dreamer. The world in its dross materiality is presented as an objective reality different in essence from the percipient subject. As soon as the coiled power stirs up and begins to course along the central track of *suṣumnā*, the mundane world vanishes from sight and is even obliterated from memory, and a new world of colour and light rises into view. It is a world which is not material and solid, as the one before, but is a realm of ethereal and supra-physical forces. As the *kuṇḍalinī* advances upwards

from centre to centre, the *yogin* becomes more and more self-conscious. In the heart, as well as in the *ājñā-cakra*, the mind becomes concentrated. The next upward movement leads the mind up through a condition of peripheral self-knowledge to the *sahasrāra*, the apex of man's spiritual frame, where the Universal Lord with His Power unfolds Himself in His supernal majesty to the *yogin*. Beyond *sahasrāra, māyā* (which in this context is not what *māyā* commonly connotes but is the manifestation of the power of the Lord) disappears, and the *yogin* becomes established in the *Brahman*.

The ascent of *kuṇḍalinī* is accompanied by a sound which is, as it were, luminous and not accessible to the external senses. It is the eternal sound which functions in the deepest recesses of the entire world of creation — in the heart of the universe — and bears no resemblance to the worldly sounds as known to us. This is called 'the unstruck sound' (*anāhata dhvani*) in the ancient Indian scriptures. It is the same which was given the name of *anāhada* by the *Sants* later. It corresponds to *Sabda Brahman* and *praṇava* or *oṁkāra* of the Vedic mystics. It is said :

> *anāhatasya śabdasya tasya śabdasya yor dhvaniḥ .*
> *dhvanerantargataṁ jyotirjyoterantargataṁ manaḥ ..*
> *tanmano vilayaṁ yāti tadviṣṇoḥ paramaṁ padam ..*

The idea is that the eternal unstruck sound contains the light which in its turn shelters the germ of mind. As soon as this mind is dissolved, suddenly there lies before the *yogin* nothing but the immensities of the Absolute Being.

The *Yogāvacāra Manual,* the *Dhammasañganī,* the *Viśuddhi Māggo,* and the *Abhidharma Kośa* have other *yogic* schemes in consonance with the philosophical position of each of the religious sects drawing inspiration from the above works. Some idea of *yoga,* as practised by the Jainas, may be gathered from the works of Umāsvātī, Hemcandra, and other Ācāryas. The scope and range of the present chapter, however, compels us to be brief.

Chapter VI

THE PATH OF KNOWLEDGE

Essential requisites for the path of Knowledge — *Śravaṇa, manana,* and *nididhyāsana* of the *Mahāvākyas* as a means of Self-realisation — Two types of Upaniṣadic sayings : *mahāvākya* and *avāntaravākya* — *Upāsanā* as means of Self-realisation; four kinds of external *upāsanā* : (*i*) *sampat,* (*ii*) *āropa,* (*iii*) *saṁvarga*, and (*iv*) *adhyāsa*; two kinds of internal *upāsanā* : (*i*) *saguṇa* and (*ii*) *nirguṇa* — *Upāsanā* and *śraddhā* — Differences between *knowledge* and *meditation* (*upāsanā*) — Innumerable Subdivisions.

Essential Requisites for the Path of Knowledge :

A brief but effective survey of the path of knowledge (*jñāna-mārga*) may also be justifiably provided here. It is evident from the study of the sacred books that, along this path, there are four preliminary qualifications that have to be successfully fulfilled before the seeker can hope to plunge into the mainstream of his quest (*sādhanā*). These qualifications consist of : (*i*) a keen sense of discrimination (*viveka*) between what is eternal and timeless (*nitya*) and what is non-eternal and transitory (*a-nitya*); (*ii*) a strong detachment from

all objects of desire, either in this life below or in the heavenly life above (*vairāgya*); (*iii*) acquisition and assimilation of the six spiritual virtues deemed to be essential in any intensive application to the path of knowledge, viz., control of the mind and the senses (*śama* and *dama*), consequent upon the attainment of the previous states, the gaining of such power as will keep the senses restrained from the worldly snares (*uparati*), the ability to remain steady under trying and extreme conditions (*titikṣā*), ability at concentration (*samādhi*), and the illumination of a firm faith in and reverence for the teacher and the scriptures (*śraddhā*); (*iv*) and an intense desire for release and emancipation (*mumukṣā*) from worldly existence. These are the essential prerequisites or qualifications for a seeker going forth in quest along the path of knowledge.

Śravaṇa, Manana, and Nididhyāsana of the Mahāvākyas as a Means of Self-realisation :

The method of *Brahman*-realisation along this path is a thorough understanding and excogitation of the great Upaniṣadic sayings, technically called *Mahāvākyas*, which possess the essence of unitive wisdom. It is stated that a duly qualified seeker, when he has reached a point of satiety in respect of his worldly enjoyments, has really reached a climactic point, whence his course is towards a competent teacher who is well versed in the mystic lore and endowed with intuitive knowledge of *Brahman*. The seeker solicits, sitting at the feet of his teacher, the favour of the latter to impart to him

the divine knowledge. Being thus implored, the teacher (*guru*) out of compassion communicates to the seeker, in due time, the essence of monistic knowledge through aphoristic and cryptic sentences, but in a manner intelligible to the seeker. The seeker, who is now under the wings of the teacher, is required to listen closely to and assimilate the exhortations and teachings given to him (*śravaṇa*). His subsequent duties are prolonged and discerning meditation upon the meaning (*manana*) of the teachings received, and then a singleminded contemplation (*nididhyāsana*). These three, viz., *śravaṇa, manana*, and *nididhyāsana* constitute the direct method of the supreme Self-realisation. The most important of the three is undoubtedly the first one. But mere hearing, without understanding the sense, cannot yield the desired result. It is necessary, therefore, that in the stage of meditation there should be a regular and systematised course of excogitation (*vicāra*) on the true import of the Upaniṣadic sayings or *mahāvākyas* that have been referred to above. It is believed that a seeker after Self-knowledge, with a keen interest and with other qualifications in this process, is able to attain immediate knowledge. For him the process of *nididhyāsana* becomes unnecessary.

But in respect to others, and their name is legion, the above direct method cannot be feasible. Due to certain inherent defects in their intellectual make-up, the process referred to above is by itself incapable of paving the way to Self-realisation. For knowledge to dawn on their minds, it is essential that the mind be purged of its impurities. And the method of removing the impurities is technically known as 'med-

itation' (*upāsanā*), which is more or less another name for *nididhyāsana*, referred to above.

Two Types of Upaniṣadic Sayings; Mahāvākyas and Avāntaravākyas :

In Vedānta the supreme end of human endeavour is the realisation of the unity of *Brahman*. The Upaniṣadic sayings embody a twofold wisdom. The so-called *mahāvākyas* are those which teach the identity of the individual self (*jīvātman*) with the Supreme Self (*Paramātman*); whereas the other sayings which inculcate integral wisdom concerning the nature of *ātman* or *paramātman* are meaningfully called secondary sayings (*avāntaravākyas*). An immediate knowledge of *Brahman* follows from the former, whereas the latter can only lead to indirect knowledge, in which the unity of the individual self with the Divine Essence is not realised. What is called immediate knowledge through *mahāvākyas* implies an intellectual activity called *vicāra*. But there are psychological difficulties in the case of the ordinary persons, which render any *vicāra* or excogitation impossible.

Upāsanā as Means of Self-realisation; Four Kinds of External Upāsanā; Two Kinds of Internal Upāsanā :

It is for persons labouring under these difficulties that the path of *upāsanā* is recommended. It should be remembered, however, that even *upāsanā* may lead

to direct realisation. *Upāsanā* is a form of meditation in which the mind functions in a fixed direction, unhampered and ignored by any distractions caused by the intrusion of foreign thoughts. It is a mental mode, the origin of which does not rest upon and is not guided by the object of meditation as such, but only by the will of the thinker. The meditation may be external or internal according to the nature of the object on which the mind is concentrated.

The external type of *upāsanā* may be of four kinds, viz., (*i*) *sampat,* (*ii*) *āropa,* (*iii*) *saṁvarga*, and (*iv*) *adhyāsa*. The first, *i.e.*, *sampat*, consists in meditating upon objects of inferior quality, thinking of them as possessing higher qualities. When a part is meditated upon as a whole, we have a case of the second type of *upāsanā*, called *āropa*. Cases in which the object of meditation is conceived of as something endowed with function and activity (*kriyā*) of some kind, it is called *saṁvarga upāsanā*. But when the meditation emanates from an act of superimposition (*āropa*), induced by a regard for the sacred injunctions (in spite of the presence of a conflicting knowledge coming from actual perception), the *upāsanā* is known as *adhyāsa*. These four types of external *upāsanā* relate themselves respectively to quality (*guṇa*), relation (*sambandha*), action (*kriyā*), and scriptural injunction (*śāstra-upadeśa*) only, and are consequently treated as external.

The internal *upāsanā*, technically called *ahaṁgraha*, proceeds from a fundamental identification of the object with the subject as the focus of meditation. It can be of two kinds, viz., (*i*) *saguṇa* and (*ii*) *nirguṇa*. Medita-

tion in this form of *upāsanā* is an internal activity. The *saguṇa* form of internal *upāsanā* represents mental stability in the essence of the qualified Deity (*saguṇa-devatā*). The stability is based on a sense of identity with the Deity, which is derived from the knowledge imparted by the teacher.

Upāsanā and Śraddhā :

Upāsanā or meditation on *Brahman* is based upon an indirect knowledge of *Brahman.* It refers only to a kind of generalised knowledge, but is not erroneous, on account of the fact that it originates from a valid source. The *mahāvākyas* describe *Brahman* not merely as existing but as verily identical with the seeker (*sādhaka*) himself ; but if one is devoid of intellectual powers and incapable of proper discrimination (*viveka*), it is not possible for him to have immediate knowledge for the *mahāvākyas*. He will have to supplement his inadequate power of discrimination (*viveka*) by some other means. He cannot regard *Brahman* as his own self, owing to the fact that through error he looks upon material objects, *e.g.*, the body, as his own Self. A man of faith (*śraddhā*), without prejudice to what has been stated above, can easily have a direct knowledge of *Brahman*, because there is no inherent and fundamental incompatibility between the direct and immediate knowledge of the world and the direct knowledge of the Supreme Unity. The *upāsanā*, implying the identity between *ātman* and *Brahman*, is expressed in the judgement "I am *Brahman*" (*'ahaṁ brahmāsmi'*), and

is therefore enjoined. The instruction of a competent teacher is just the thing required for the guidance of a seeker (*upāsaka*). But there can be no immediate realisation of *Brahman* merely through excogitation or *vicāra.*

Difference between Knowledge and Meditation (*Upāsanā*) :

A fundamental difference exists between *knowledge* which is subject to the nature of the object (*vastu*), viz., *pramāṇa* and *prameya*, and *meditation*, which is entirely subject to the will, effort, and faith of the knowing agent (*pramātā*). Knowledge arises from a mental disquisition on the essence of the object. Once the mind is illumined by knowledge, it ever remains so. The arrival of knowledge marks the obliteration of the notion that the world is real. This leads to *jīvanmukti*. On the other hand, the basis of meditation (*upāsanā*) is a strong faith in the words of the teacher (*guru*). According to competent teachers, *upāsanā* has to be continued until a knowledge of identity with the object of meditation, which is *Brahman,* is attained. It is for this reason that *upāsanā* should continue even till the dying moment. The limit of the period of *upāsanā* is indicated by the realisation of one's own self as identical with the object of meditation, *i.e., Brahman.*

It is imperative that *upāsanā* must be practised as a daily routine (*nitya-karma*) and never neglected. If *upāsanā* were a *nitya-karma*, it would continue even in a state of dream. There is another fundamental distinc-

tion between *knowledge* and *meditation* (*upāsanā*). One who has attained knowledge can perform worldly duties without any hindrance, because there is no inherent contradiction between true knowledge, on the one hand, and man's worldly life, on the other. But one who is devoted exclusively to meditation is not in a position to get on satisfactorily with the normal activities of life. The reason for this is not hard to find. In the case of knowledge, the mind and the other organs remain unaffected. They are sublimated by knowledge and not destroyed. There is no such thing as suspension of mental activities in the case of a man of knowledge, but such suspension is binding on a man on the path of meditation. For a true knowledge of Reality, it is not necessary to have recourse to mental quiet. A knowledge of *Brahman*, therefore, does not require a stoppage of the functions of mind, for the simple reason that *Brahman* is self-luminous (*svayamprakāśa*).

The meditation of *saguṇa Brahman* may finally lead to a meditation of *nirguṇa Brahman*, which culminates in *samādhi*. The path of knowledge or *vicāra* is intended for persons whose minds are not restless. Even *nirguṇa upāsanā* is of a twofold nature, according as it is alloyed with desire or is free from it.

The path of knowledge used to be pursued in the past almost exclusively by persons of the fourth order (*sannyāsa*), who had renounced the world and severed all social and domestic ties, in order to devote themselves exclusively and singlemindedly to the cultivation of their ideal. But there were often great exceptions too. Legends and the scriptures provide

many examples of such exceptional cases, wherein persons belonging to other three stages (*āśramas*) have followed the path of *nirguṇa upāsanā*.

The journey along this path commences, as already noted, actually from the election by an illumined teacher (*ācārya*) and initiation by him into the fundamentals of knowledge in the shape of *Vedānta mahāvākya*, purporting to affirm the essential unity of the individual self with the one Universal Self. The words of the *guru* being potent, they are capable of generating direct and immediate intuition in the mind of the recipient, provided the mind is not obsessed with doubts and misapprehensions. Because doubts and misapprehensions cloud the mind and are a very common case with us all, direct and immediate intuitions are extremely rare. Usually the mind has to be properly disciplined and elevated before the actual illumination can take place.

The education of the mind is of a twofold nature. Initially it is an intellectual discipline of the most rigorous type, and finally a regular concentration. Like every mystic, the initiate on the path of knowledge is aware that logical intellect, with its power of analysis and synthesis, can under no circumstances arrive at Integral Truth. It is positively harmful, unless it is endowed with faith in revealed wisdom. Its value has, however, been accepted in Vedānta to the extent of interpreting and rationalising the scriptures, but only as subordinate to revelation. After it has done its duty in convincing itself (*asaṅga-bhāvanā-nirvṛtti*), it must be superseded by *yogic* contemplation (*nididhyāsana*) in

order to intuit the knowledge of the Self implied in the *mahāvākya*. It is thus clear that even in the path of knowledge, a very important place is assigned to *yoga*. But the difference of the *jñānin* from the *yogin* lies in the fact that the former relies on the potency of the *mahāvākya* for the dawning of the Intuition. Contrarily, *yoga* is a valuable aid to the seeker as a disciplinary medium. Further, the *yogin* owes his intuition of Self to *yoga* alone, and never to any verbal suggestion. There is an additional polarity between the two methods, resulting from the variance in their respective stands in regard to the quality and content of the Intuition concerned. This comparative estimate is a desideratum both from the scholarly end and for the guidance of a neophyte in his pursuit of the ideal of Self-realisation.

Innumerable Subdivisions :

There are innumerable subdivisions of the path of knowledge. Śaṅkara lays down one method, Maṇḍana Miśra (in his *Brahmasiddhi*) another, while Bhartṛprapañca, a third one. The conception of *jñāna* and its probable relationship with *karma* also varies. So is the case with *upāsanā*. This is certainly not a suitable occasion for explaining the varieties of *upāsanā* and the ends reached by each of them.

It is well known that the intellectual capacity of the aspirant varies from man to man. Hence what is appropriate for one may be useless for another. The accredited seeker after *jñāna* is one who is desirous of

liberation and has achieved all the spiritual prerequisites (*sādhanās*). As the mind of such a person is free from all proclivities to wrangling, it does not require an elaborate mechanism of ratiocination to convince him of the unity of Self and the falsity of appearances. An understanding and absorption of the meaning of *mahāvākya* is all that is required of him.

CHAPTER VII

THE PATH OF *BHAKTI*

Bhāva and *bhakti* — Madhusūdana's view of eleven stages of *Bhakti* — Twelve kinds of Divine Love (*bhakti*) according to some authorities — Fourfold classification of Devotees — The dual nature of the Supreme Reality as Lover and Beloved — Monistic attitude to Divine Love — Views of Utpalāçārya and Ānandavardhana — The view of Madhusūdana Sarasvatī — Disappearance of duality in Unitive Experience — Other views — The Supreme Being and the Polarisation of indivisible Unity — Self-delight in the Absolute and Polarisation — The *Tāntrika* view of Self-delight — The *Ṣūfī* view — Relation of *jñāna* and *bhakti* — Infinite complexities of the mystic process of Self-realisation.

Bhāva and Bhakti :

God-realisation cannot remain the exclusive preserve of a fortunate few. The yearning for it is fairly universal, and hence demands a path which is easy and can enable everybody to pursue the cherised

end. Hence comes the path of loving devotion, which enkindles in the heart of the seeker the pure flame that helps him bind himself to God in a bond of whole-hearted devotion. Does not the *Mahābhārata* say that God holds them dearest who are entirely devoted to Him ?[1]

It does not require much effort to know that among us there are many whose hearts are naturally warm, sensitive, and emotional, and to whom the cold and heartless ascetism and intellectual discipline involved in the methods described earlier do not appeal much. Such men cannot but have a recourse to the path of the primary but very strong sensibility of love. Love inspires and elevates them to establish a direct communion with the Infinite along the path of devotion (*bhāva* or *bhakti*). Love and devotion may, however, assume diverse forms, a fact of which a student of the history of mysticism is well aware. If an Aṇḍāl or a Mīrābāī was an impassioned devotee of the Lord, a Rābia' or a St. Teresa was no less so, though each had her individual line of approach.

It is explicitly stated in the *Bhāgavata* that the path of devotion or *bhakti* is most appropriate to a seeker who is no longer attached to the world and yet not wholly detached from it either. To such a man alone, as one whose heart is tender and soft, the path of devotion is suitable.

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1. Mbh., XII. p. 343. 65.

Madhusūdana's View of Eleven Stages of Bhakti :

In the *Bhagavad-bhakti-rasāyanam*,[2] Madhusūdana gives, on the basis of the *Bhāgavata*, an elaborate account of the process in which *bhakti* is enkindled in the heart. He finds eleven stages in *bhakti*, which may be summed up as follows :

(1) Personal service to God or to the elevated souls devoted to Him (*mahatsevā*). This is usually known as the cultivation of the society of the great (*satsaṅga*).

(2) Becoming on account of good qualities an object of His or their compassion (*teṣām dayā-pātratā*).

(3) Faith in the life lived by them (*teṣām dharmeṣu śraddhā*) and in the devotional religion (*dharmas*) practised by them.

(4) When faith is strong, it produces a sense of indifference or even positive aversion to the objects of enjoyment here and hereafter, and a corresponding devotion to the pursuit of a loving service to God. This service consists of the per-

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2. *prathamammahatāṁ sevā, taddayāpātratā tataḥ.*
śraddhā'tha teṣāṁ dharmeṣu, tato hariguṇaśrutiḥ..
tato ratyaṅkurotpattiḥ, svarūpādhigatistataḥ .
premavṛddhiḥ parānande, tasyātha sphuraṇaṁ tataḥ . .
bhagavaddharmaniṣṭha'tasvasminstadguṇaśālitā .
premṇo'tha paramā kāṣṭhetyuditā bhaktibhūmikāḥ . .
Ullāsa I, 34-36

formance of the fairly well-known ninefold *sādhana-bhakti* mentioned in the *Bhāgavata*, viz., listening to the glories of God (*hariguṇaśravaṇa*), etc.[3]

(5) Growth of the sprout of Divine Love (*ratyaṅkura*). This is love in its nascent state, which, grown into maturity, leads to further developments as illustrated in the six stages that follow. In terms of *Vaiṣṇava* devotional mysticism, it is the permanent mood (*sthāyībhāva*) which matures under suitable conditions into the overflowing nectar of pure devotion (*bhakti-rasa*). The permanent mood, mentioned above, is of the nature of a psychic disposition; it has the form of the Divine Love assimilated into the mind already brought to a melting state (*dravāvasthā*) by the action of certain exciting forces (*uddīpana*) such as passion, fear, etc.

(6) Self-realisation (*svarūpādhigati*).

(7) Intensification of Divine Love (*premavṛddhi*).

(8) Direct Vision of the Divine Beloved (*bhagavatsphuraṇa*).

(9) Firm adherence to the attributes of the Divine, as illustrated in the lives of the elevated devotional souls (*bhagavaddharme niṣṭhā*). This may be the result of effort, as in the case of Śuka, or may be a spontaneous process requiring no ex-

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3. *śravaṇaṁ kīrtanaṁ viṣṇoḥ smaraṇaṁ pādasevanam .*
arcanaṁ vandanaṁ dāsyaṁ saukhyamātmanivedanam ..
Śrīmad Bhāgavata, III. 5. 23.

ternal inspiration, as in the case of the Gopīs of Vṛndāvana.

(10) Spiritual transformation through a conscious evolution of the eternal Divine attributes in the devotee (*svasmin tadguṇaśālitā*).

(11) Perfection of Love (*premṇaḥ parākāṣṭhā*). Love becomes so deep and intense that separation from the Beloved even for a single moment becomes unbearable. Long separation in this state is liable to prove fatal.

We have referred above to the melting of the heart (*dravāvasthā*). It is in this state that the Divine Image, if it may be called so, enters into the heart and persists there as a permanent impression. In consequence, the mystic sees the Divine Self in every being, and every being in the Divine Self. Mystics are classified under three heads, whether their state is accompanied by a sense of the reality of the world, or of its unreality, or by its absolute oblivion.

Twelve Kinds of Divine Love (Bhakti) according to Some Authorities :

Certain well-known *Vaiṣṇava* works tell us that Love is of twelve kinds, viz. : (*i*) *upta*, (*ii*) *patta*, (*iii*) *lalita*, (*iv*) *dalita*, (*v*) *milita*, (*vi*) *kalita*, (*vii*) *chalita*, (*viii*) *calita*, (*ix*) *krānta*, (*x*) *vihṛta*, (*xi*) *galita*, and (*xii*) *santṛpta*.

In the *galita* variety, love represents a state of divine mania (*divyonmāda*), in which the lover passes

through a series of psychic conditions characterised by momentary silence, horripilation, trembling, etc. Being always anxious to meet the Beloved, the heart melts on the mere utterance of the Beloved's name, is beside itself with surging emotion, and gets immersed in the delightful experience. The highest form of Love, however, is illustrated in *santṛpta* which embodies the supreme delight of a perfect Divine Realisation. In other words, it constitutes the unspeakable joy of the state of *jīvanmukti*. During this stage of Love, a moment's separation from the Beloved is felt like a separation of ages.

Love, up to the stage of *galita*, has for its object the Divine Beloved as conditioned by form, but the object of the *santṛpta* variety of Love is the Limitless Divine; so the object being one and the same, the continuity of love from one state of it to the other states is easily possible. The devotee's forgetfulness of the object symbolising the Divine Beloved is a sign of the melting of the heart at its height. Hence the classification of the lovers as high and low is based on the different degrees of the melting of the heart. They are termed as mere love and attraction (*praṇaya*), suffusion of tenderness (*sneha*), or overflow of the deepest love (*anurāga*).

Fourfold Classification of Devotees :

From a slightly different point of view, souls devoted to the love of God may be divided into four distinct classes, viz. :

(*a*) Souls which are eternally wrapped up in love (*nitya premaparītātmā*) and which know no real separation, being always absorbed in the thoughts of God. The Gopīs of Vṛndāvana are examples of this type.

(*b*) Souls which are occasionally infatuated with the charms of love (*kadācit premamohita*), *e.g.*, Śukadeva.

(*c*) Souls which have the sudden dawning of love (*kṛtrim premayukta*) through confrontation with the world of sense, *e.g.*, Prahlāda, or without any such confrontation with the world, *e.g.*, Arjuna.

(*d*) Souls which regret that they do not, unfortunately, belong to any of the above-mentioned categories, *e.g.*, king Yudhiṣṭhira.

The Dual Nature of the Supreme Reality as Lover and Beloved :

The question may be posed here : if the Supreme Reality is one and indivisible, free from the bondage of *guṇas,* how can we describe the highest realisation of the Supreme Reality in terms of Love, which presupposes duality ? How can the same Being be conceived to be both a Lover as well as a Beloved, except in ignorance and confusion ?

These questions may be answered from two points of view implied by the metaphysical position of dualistic pluralism. In that case the individual soul

(*jīvātman*) is considered either as a spiritual monad (*cidaṇu*), an eternal aspect of the Divine Being, as conceived by the different *Vaiṣṇava* philosophers, or as a spiritual being, co-eternal and universal with the Divine Being Itself. This, by itself, provides us with the answers.

Monistic Attitude to Divine Love :

But even if the ultimate position be monistic, Love is not inexplicable. It has been justifiably maintained that even Unitive Consciousness is no bar to *bhakti*, which is a suffusion of tenderness (*sneha*) and implies melting of the heart (*dravāvasthā*). It is true that *bhakti* arises from a knowledge of the greatness of its object. But as this greatness comprises the Divine qualities of Truth (*sat*), Consciousness (*cit*), and Bliss (*ānanda*), which are the Essence of the Divine and are unlike those other qualities of perfection (*pūrṇatva*) which are non-essential, there cannot be much difficulty in explaining Love from the monistic standpoint. Hence Unitive Consciousness, as identical with the consciousness of greatness, is the fountainhead of the *santṛpta* variety of Love mentioned above and is certainly not an impediment to its origin. This Love, it need hardly be pointed out, is unitive and indivisible (*akhaṇḍārtha*). The other attributes of the Divine, *e.g.*, Freedom of Will (*satyasaṁkalpatva*), etc., are rooted in Pure Nature (*sāttvika prakṛti*) and not in the Essence of God, and consequently are natural. These are admitted, through

nescience (*avidyā*), in the Divine but never in the human soul (*jīva*). For a monist, there is no sublation of greatness even there. Love, up to the stage of its development known as *galita*, is preceded by a knowledge of the greatness of God. This Love, reinforced by the psychic dispositions inherited from past life and the moral force of *karma* pertaining to the individual, makes the lover forget the world completely. Unitive (*advaita*) *bhakti* and Unitive (*kevala*) *jñāna* are practically the same, except that in such *jñāna*, physical cravings, such as those brought about by hunger, thirst, etc., persist. But in *bhakti* these cravings disappear altogether.

The Views of Utpalācārya and Ānandavardhana :

The monistic attitude to Divine Love assumes other forms also. One may refer in this connection to the beautiful verses in Utpalācārya's *Śiva-stotrāvalī*, addressed to the Divine Lord. The hymn is sung by a privileged soul who has realised his identity with Him. In a preceding section of this work it has been shown that mystic experience is much deeper than the aesthetic transport of the ordinary type. Ānandavardhana in his *Dhvanyāloka* has observed that the joys of artistic inspirations and even of *Brahman*-realisation pale into insignificance before the raptures of *bhakti*. Ānandavardhana says :

yā vyāpāravatī rasān rasāyituṁ dṛṣṭiḥ kavīnāṁ na vā
dṛṣṭiryā paramārthavastuviṣayonmeṣā ca vaipaściti . .

te dve apyavalambya viśvamakhilaṁ nirvarṇayanto vayaṁ
śrānta naiva tulabdhamabdhiśayana tvadbhaktitulyaṁ
sukhaṁ..[4]

O you enthroned in the mighty ocean ! that fresh vision which helps the poet to express the beauty (*rasa*) inherent and variegated in the worldly objects, and that steady gaze of wisdom, which is ever applied to the discovery of facts of proved spiritual worth : these two have been our light and sustenance in our tiring endeavour of furnishing a complete picture of the universe, which has, however, done us up. But never have we enjoyed a fuller and greater bliss than when our hearts have been saturated with Your Love.

It follows then that when the heart is replete with love, it dissolves the dualism of Lover and Beloved, of the subject and the object, of *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*, and of myself and thyself. It is an infinite and self-effulgent sweetness in which indivisible and unshakable unity reigns supreme.

The View of Madhusūdana Sarasvatī :

This approach, however, is modified by Madhusūdana Sarasvatī, who lays special emphasis on the distinction of *bhakti* and *jñāna*, saying that the difference manifests itself in the (*i*) essence (*svarūpa*),

4. *Dhvanyāloka*, Chap. III.

(*ii*) means (*sādhana*), (*iii*) fruit (*phala*), and (*iv*) subject (*adhikārin*) of each of the two: *bhakti* and *jñāna*. Itemwise the difference may be explained as follows:

(*i*) Thus, though both are modes (*vṛtti*) of the mind, being of Divine Form, *bhakti* is determinate in character (*savikalpaka*), and is preceded by the melting of the heart; but *jñāna* is indeterminate in character (*nirvikalpaka*), in which the Unique Self is revealed as Formless, and hence has no power to affect the heart.

(*ii*) The means of *bhakti*, *i.e.*, *sādhana*, is a knowledge of God's glory inspired by reading or listening to the sacred works wherein the divine glory is described; but the means to *Brahmajñāna* is the oral reception of the *mahāvākya* of Vedānta, which inculcates the identity of individual soul (*jīva*) and *Brahman*.

(*iii*) The immediate fruit, *i.e.*, *phala* of *bhakti* is the deep Love of God, and that of *jñāna*, the destruction of ignorance, which is the root of all evil.

(*iv*) The subject of *bhakti*, *i.e.*, the *adhikārin*, may be any human being irrespective of any qualification; but the subject of *jñāna* is a *paramahaṁsa sannyāsin*, one who has achieved perfect detachment and is endowed with the fourfold qualification, viz., discrimination (*viveka*), renunciation (*vairāgya*), practice of the six virtues (*sādhanas*), and desire for liberation (*mumukṣā*).

It goes without saying that the foregoing view is Madhusūdana's personal one, and there are different

opinions as well. In connection with Unitive Love (*advaita bhakti*) one is reminded of the view of Narahari, the author of *Bodhasāra*. His beautiful lines are :

dvaitaṁ mohāya bodhāt prāk prāpte bodhe maniṣayā.
bhaktyartha kalpitaṁ dvaitamadvaitādapi sundaram..[5]

Duality leads to illusory and unreal attachment unless knowledge is dawned upon man. But after the flame of knowledge has been kindled the duality based solely upon devotion and love, becomes far more beautiful than non-dualism or unitive knowledge.

In other words it means that dualism as such is not a handicap. It is so, only if self-knowledge does not arise. But for one who has been favoured with Unitive Knowledge, the duality set up by Will for purposes of Love (*vilāsa*) is more beautiful and attractive than the knowledge of Unity itself. As a matter of fact, it is, incomparable in beauty and joy.

Disappearance of Duality in Unitive Experience :

About the Unitive Experience, where there is no room for '*I*' and '*Thou*' in the Ultimate Experience, Mahmud Shābistārī says in his *Gulshān-i-Raz* :

All sects but multiply the I and Thou ;
This I and Thou belong to partial being ;

5. XXXII. p. 165, verse 42. Bengali Edition, 1336 B.S.

When I and Thou and several beings vanish,
Then Mosque, Church shall bind thee no more.
Our individual life is but a phantom;
Make clear thine eye, and see the Reality.

This is also exactly what Rāya Rāmānanda is reported to have said to Caitanya when describing the moment of fulfilment — the moment when the consciousness of the Lover and the Beloved as distinct from each other, completely disappears. Rādhā, in sending a message to her beloved, Kṛṣṇa, furnishes a thrilling account of this great moment as realised by her. She says :

ahaṁ kāntā kāntastvamiti na tadānīṁ matirabhūn-
manovṛttirluptā tvamahamiti nau dhīrapi tathā.
bhavān bharttā bhāryāhamiti yadidānīṁ vyavasiti-
stathāpyasmin prāṇaḥ sphurati nanu citraṁ kimaparam..[6]

That is, at the blessed moment of our Union there was no consciousness that I was your lover and you were my beloved, because the mind having ceased to function, the distinction between 'I' and 'You' vanished.

In other words, this sense (that you are the husband and I am the wife) has now revived (with the renewed functioning of the mind in the post-union stage). And it is surpassingly strange that even now life is not extinct in this body.

6. *Caitanya Candrodaya*, Act VII. pp. 428-430 (Mursidabad Edition).

We find an expression of the same truth in a similar language in the *Caitanya Caritāmṛta*. The following words are put in the mouth of Rāya Rāmānanda. He says :

pahilehi rāga nayana bhaṅga bhelo .
anudina baḍhala avadhi nā gelo ..
na so ramaṇa, na hama ramaṇī .
duhu mana manobhava peṣala jāni ..[7]

In the pre-union stage, behold the dawning of love just as the eyes of the one meet those of the other ! Illimitable as this love is, it grows incessantly. It is neither Yours nor mine ; it is in us both, equally and jointly embedded in our nature. Kṛṣṇa, the incarnation of love, is not its exclusive creator, neither does its fountainhead lie in me, the beloved. Love which springs only when our eyes meet, is the divine Eros, which has kneaded our beings into this total and blissful Unity.

Other Views :

What has been said in the foregoing words throws a flood of light to unravel and simplify the secrets of the philosophy of Love. The Upaniṣadic literature, the *Tantras,* the Buddhist and *Vaiṣṇava-sahajiyā* works, the esoteric section of the Platonic and Neo-Platonic culture, and the *Ṣūfī* literature (in Persian,

7. C. C., *Madhyalīlā*.

Urdu, and Sindhi) — all bear testimony to a high degree of knowledge and understanding of this philosophy, which was guarded and kept away, as a sacred treasure, from the profane gaze of the layman.

The Supreme Being and the Polarisation of Indivisible Unity :

It has been explained that, before creation, the Supreme Being, in the plenitude of His power, was alone; but as this power was fully self-contained within the Supreme Being, there could not be any consciousness of delight. The reason is that enjoyment requires what may be described as a division as it were, in the Indivisible. He, therefore, made Himself into two — Subject and Object, Father and Son, Lover and Beloved, Master and Servant, Male and Female, *Puruṣa* and *Prakṛti*, and so forth. It is needless to say in this connection that this polarisation of the Indivisible Unity is an essential precondition of self-enjoyment or self-knowledge. As it is a 'moment' in Eternity we need not, and we possibly cannot interpret it in terms of time and space. The *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* says :

> *sa vai naiva reme; tasmād ekākī na ramate; sa dvitīyam aicchat ; sa haitāvān āsa yathā strī-pumāṁsau sampariṣvaktau; sa imam evātmānaṁ dvedhāpātayat, tataḥ patiś ca patnī cābhavatām.*[8]

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8. I. 4. 3.

> That is, He (the Supreme Being) verily did not have any delight. Hence one who is alone does not have any delight. He wished for a second self. He magnified himself, and how large it was, a woman and a man in close embrace. He caused that self to divide and shape into two parts. From that came the two : husband and wife.

The point may be further elaborated thus. The Supreme Being, *Ātman* or Self, surveying the surroundings, sees nothing else but Himself. The realisation of His loneliness arouses in Him two feelings, one, that of fear, and the other, that of a desire for companionship. His fear is, however, soon overcome as he realises that there is nothing else of which he need be afraid. His yearning for companionship is fulfilled when He divides Himself into two parts, which are then called husband and wife.

Self-delight in the Absolute and Polarisation :

Self-delight (*ātma-ramaṇa*) implies an interaction of the two poles of existence, and a desire for it in the Absolute is the origin of the polarisation. In the language of the mysticism of love we may say that the two poles represent the Lover and the Beloved. God in His Absolute and unrelated Essence is Love; but as one of the two poles of manifestation in the world of relations, He plays the role of both the Lover and the Beloved from different points of view.

If He is regarded as Lover, the human soul is regarded as His beloved, and *vice versa*. The primary impulse to creation may, therefore, be expressed as a desire in the desireless Absolute — a desire, either to love or to be loved. In the Unity, there is neither the one nor the other. What is usually known as *Kṛṣṇa* and *Rādhā* or as *Śiva* and *Śakti* or as Father and Son, is in truth nothing but the Supreme Reality beholding Itself in reflection — the Absolute Truth above all relations, realising Itself in Knowledge and Love through an infinite series of relations, which may be viewed both as real and imaginary.

There is a clear statement in the *Dīpakojjvala-grantha*[9] that the Supreme Reality, called *Kṛṣṇa* by the *Vaiṣṇavas,* assumed the dual form of *Puruṣa* and *Prakṛti* in order to enjoy Himself as Bliss Divine. It is beautifully expressed as follows :

rasa āsvādana lāgi hailā dui mūrtti .
sei hetu kṛṣṇa haya puruṣa prakṛti ..

That is, to taste the joy of love, the Lord assumed two forms. It is for the same reason that *Kṛṣṇa* manifests Himself both as *puruṣa* and *prakṛti.*[10]

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9. MS., (C.U. No. 564). pp. I(B).

10. Other similar and well-known Sahajiyā texts, viz., *Rādhā-rasa-kārikā*, *Ratna-sāra*, *Prema-vilāsa*, *Vivarta-vilāsa, Sahaja-upāsanā-tattva* (the last-named work by Taruṇī Ramaṇa), and other kindred literature are very explicit on this point.

The Tāntrika View of Self-delight :

It must be remembered that the stage of Self-delight is midway between Unity and Duality, a stage which is no longer an indivisible Unity and yet not a clear-cut duality or multiplicity, with oneness held in abeyance. This is expressed in the *Tantras* in the cryptic manner that 'ā' representing *ānanda* or Self-delight, is the link, so to say, between 'a' or *anuttara*, the Transcendent Being, and 'i' or *icchā*, the Cosmic Will.[11]

The above statement needs a little elucidation. The threefold character of the Ultimate Reality (*Brahman*) is expressed through the concept of *Saccidānanda*, *i.e.*, an integration and harmony of Existence (*sat*), Consciousness (*cit*) and Bliss (*ānanda*), in their purest forms. The harmony of the three is of a dynamic character—expressed through the apparent paradox that though these are inseparable, each of them retains its distinctness. Thus, Existence, Consciousness, and Bliss can exist, each in a state of Pure Existence, and also in a state of harmony with each other. But the Highest Principle (*Pūrṇa Tattva*) is superior to the *Saccidānanda* stage of the Ultimate Reality. This is the stage of undiluted Existence (*sanmātra*), which when expressed, assumes the form of a *kalā* or *śakti* of this principle. The *Tantras* further simplify the saying that Consciousness (*cit*) is the primal and outward expression of the Highest Principle and hence is denoted by the

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11. *Tantrāloka*, Chapter III. Kashmir Edition.

epithet Transcendent (*anuttara*). Moreover, even though Pure Existence is distinguished by the quality of undisturbed serenity, when expressed through Consciousness it is accompanied by the outflowing vibrations (*bahiḥ spandana*) of Consciousness. These vibrations constitute only a partial expression of Consciousness in this state. But they do occur, taking in this process the form of Bliss (*ānanda*). There are inflowing vibrations (*antaḥ spandana*) as well. But these, by their very nature, transcend the bounds of Consciousness and defy attempts at understanding. The two modes of vibrations occurring in the Consciousness have, likewise, different functions—the outflowing ones, as said above, veer towards Bliss (*ānanda*), whereas the inflowing ones lead to Existence (*sat*). Bliss is further designated as the secondary Consciousness, which replaces the primary Consciousness in the wake of the outflowing vibrations, and in which the Primary Consciousness sees its own image. It is thus that we can perceive the oneness as well as distinctiveness of the three integral aspects of the Ultimate Reality.

The conception of *Saccidānanda* further emphasises, as the scriptures say, the duality inherent in the Supreme Reality. On the one hand, it is Pure Existence, eternally unmanifest, unmodified and indivisible—the secret and the unknown (*avyākṛta ciranigūḍha*). On the other, it is also Pure Consciousness (*cidrūpa*), the manifest form of the perfect, *i.e.*, that state of Consciousness in which it is sustained and supported by Existence (*sat*). Consciousness (*cit*) in this state is endowed with Power (*cit-śakti*) called *hlādinī-śakti* when it is drawn towards its source, and called

ānanda when it has an outward expression. Pure Consciousness is above all duality and all attributes, positive or negative. But Bliss (*ānanda*) which is exclusively positive calls for a bifurcation, and is explained through the mystery of the cosmic creation — the entire manifest universe emanating from Joy : *ānandādhaiva khalvimāni bhūtāni jāyante*. That duality is a precondition for *ānanda* is again emphasised in *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* : *sa ekākī na aramata, tadātmānaṁ dvidhā akarot*.

The Tāntrika theory is attempted to be explained through the cryptograms '*a*', '*ā*' and '*i*', standing respectively for (*i*) *anuttara*, the Transcendent, *i.e.*, *cit* or Pure Consciousness, (*ii*) *ānanda* or Bliss, and (*iii*) *icchā* or Will. The evolution of the last-named, *i.e.*, the Cosmic Will, takes place against the background of the loss of Pure Bliss. The latter is however the source of the outflowing vibrations, it being itself evolved from pure Consciousness. The evolution of Pure Consciousness into Pure Bliss has been termed pure Self-delight (*ātma-ramaṇa*), a state which has no outward expression and which is enjoyed only by one who knows the Ultimate Reality (*Brahman*). Suffice it to say, therefore, that all this is above objectification and is an exclusively deep spiritual process. But the Cosmic Will, still in the fullness of Bliss, goes on creating. Each atom of the universe gets impregnated with the Bliss of the Lord. The Will too, in its place, arouses an intense desire in all creatures to return to the fountainhead of Bliss from where each has come and from which each has been sundered by the process of creation. The fountain has splashed its water all around

and thus, has cut them off from the source ; but it has also charged each particle with the everpresent and irresistible desire of returning to it again. The soul's frantic and dedicated search for Bliss is nothing but a variation of the Cosmic Will flowing through us. Ultimately the source is One — the integral digit, which divides itself through its innumerable parts.[12]

The Ṣūfī View :

The *Ṣūfīs* maintain that it is through His consciousness that the only Being called *Ahad* becomes conscious and that His is the only Existence (*Wahadat*). Simultaneously with this act of self-manifestation, He projects Himself through His predisposition of love, so that He as a Lover may love Himself as His Beloved, and thus enjoy Himself. God is thus the Lover and His projection, the man, the Beloved. The next moment of inversion, however, finds man turned into the Lover and God into the Beloved. It is Love which brings man out of the Primal Unity and it is Love again which can send him back there. When the oneness of the Absolute is reached, the individuality of man is dissolved in the ocean of Eternal Bliss in which even the conceptions of Divinity and humanity disappear.[13]

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12. Kavirāj, Gopīnāth : *Tāntrika vāṅgmayameṁ śāktadṛṣṭi*, Bihar Rāṣṭrabhāṣā-pariṣad, Patna, 1963, pp. 52-57.

13. S.M.S.L., pp. 29-30.

Al-Qushairi's school of thought, like Avicenna, looked upon the Ultimate Reality as Eternal Beauty, whose very nature

Relation of Jñāna and Bhakti :

In most of the cases of Divine Realisation, therefore, it is found that the characteristics of the different types coalesce — sometimes succeeding each other and sometimes co-existing in a more or less syncretic manner. And even in succession, the relationship which guides the different features, both in their logical and even temporal sequence, is subject to variation and modification. There is no hard and fast rule, for instance, that *jñāna* should succeed *bhakti* and never precede it. In fact *bhakti* leads to *jñāna* and *jñāna* also in its turn leads to *bhakti* and both may also co-exist. And in co-existence *bhakti* and *jñāna* may each retain their distinct characters, or may fuse together into a supranormal experience, which for lack of an adequate word may be called *para-jñāna* or *parā-bhakti*. Even when both retain their peculiarities in co-existence, they may do so either independently or as one dominating the other. This domination too has its varying degrees.

Infinite Complexities of the Mystic Process of Self-realisation :

Thus any close and careful analysis of the mystic process of Self-realisation would make it apparent that

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consists in seeing its own *Face* reflected in the universe-mirror. To these mystics, it thus appears, the universe became a reflected image of Eternal Beauty. Cf. Shaikh Muhammad Iqbal : *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia*, p. 113.

it is variegated through innumerable permutations and combinations depending on the nature of light which guides the mystic, although all roads lead essentially to the same goal. Yet, and here lies another perplexing plethora of varied approaches, the supreme goal which a mystic sets before himself, or which he realises at the end of his spiritual journey, is not necessarily visualised uniformly in every case. That the ultimate experience is suprasensuous, suprarational and inexpressible is, of course, an admitted truth; but this negation is no indication of what the positive experience is like. The *fanā* and *baqā* of the Persian mystics are well-known. The *kaivalya* of Sāṁkhya is certainly to be distinguished from the *mokṣa* of monistic Vedānta and both differ from the Vaiṣṇava conception of *mokṣa,* and all from the Śaiva and Śākta views. Even among the Buddhists, the conception of the Supreme Achievement varies — not simply as those of the *Śrāvaka* and the *Pratyeka Buddha,* but also as those of the *Boddhisattva* and the *Buddha.*

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Chapter VIII

THE STAGES OF SPIRITUAL PROGRESS

An account of the seven stages (*Yoga-bhūmis*) of Spiritual Progress according to *Yoga-vāśiṣṭha Rāmāyaṇa*—The second account of the stages (*Yoga-bhūmis*) in the same work — Three stages: waking (*jāgrat*), dream (*svapna*), and dreamless sleep (*suṣupti*) — The third account of the stages (*Yoga-bhūmis*) in the same work — Analysis of five states of the Experience of a practical mystic on the 'Great Way' (*mahāpatha*) according to the *Āgamas*: (1) *Ānanda*, (2) *Udbhava*, (3) *Kampa*, (4) *Nidrā*, and (5) *Ghūrṇi*.

Seven Stages (Yoga-bhūmis) of Spiritual Progress according to Yoga-vāśiṣṭha:

No study of mystic experience would be complete without a reference to different successive states through which it is finally consummated. Some of these have already been investigated and discussed in the preceding pages. A comprehensive treatment of the subject being uncalled for in the present context, we wish to advert here to some of the more important formulations on this subject, bearing in mind that the paths, being on the whole nothing but varying arrange-

ments of the mystic stages, are necessarily divergent in form.

In the *Yoga-vāśiṣṭha Rāmāyaṇa*[1] we find in clear outline the sevenfold division of the successive stages from a gnostic's point of view. The seven stages of *Yoga* (*Yoga-bhūmis*) described therein, are as follows :

(1) *Śubhecchā* :

A desire for liberation (*śubhecchā*) comes first. The genesis of this stage is ascribable to the spirit of ennui and dissatisfaction with the worldly life, which generates in man a strong penchant for the realisation of the Truth to be achieved through a devotion to the works of spiritual import and a close association with the wise.[2]

(2) *Vicāraṇā* :

Intellectual enquiry into the nature of the Supreme Reality comes next. As a corollary to the previous stage, this stage is distinguished by the pursuit of virtuous life and by efforts made in the right direction. The impelling force behind these is twofold : the light gained from the study of the scriptures, and the elevating influence of the association with the wise. Further, the surfeit and the repulsion caused by one's involvement in worldly life goad one to this end.[3]

1. III. 118. 2.
2. III. 118. 8.
3. III. 118. 9.

(3) *Tanumānasā* :

This stage which comes next means 'attenuation' of mind, implying its purification. It marks the necessary spiritual elevation, leading to a spirit of detachment in regard to the world of perception. It is needless to say that this elevation is the result of the progress achieved through the first two stages.[4]

(4) *Sattvāpatti* :

It is realisation of the utmost mental purity (*sattva*) co-existent with the dawn of illumination. The seeker now achieves a state of rapport with the true Self and learns to live in it.[5]

(5) *Asaṁsakti* :

Next comes freedom from attachment to worldly objects. This stage is reached in the wake of one's achievement in establishing oneself in the true Self. A complete detachment from the objective world is the hall-mark of this stage.[6]

(6) *Padārthabhāvanā* :

This state represents the realisation of the unreality of objects in relation to the Absolute. The worldly objects lose all validity for the seeker

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4. III. 118. 10.
5. III. 118. 11.
6. III. 118. 12.

in this stage. Everything in the world becomes unreal.[7]

(7) *Turyagā* :

This stage signifies the attainment of Absolute Experience. The seeker in this stage of realisation attains a height where all distinctions are obliterated and the aspirant is serenely ensconced in his own being.[8] Suffice it to say, the *jīvanmukta* (the living liberated man) enjoys this state. If we talk of disembodied liberation, we must point out that this is beyond the present stage.[9]

The Second Account of the Stages (Yoga-bhūmis) in the Same Work :

In another context, in the *Yoga-vāśiṣṭha Rāmāyaṇa*, the classification of the various stages is spelled out in a different manner and new names are given to the stages.[10] The names given there to the various stages are as follows :

(1) *Prajñāvṛddhi* :

It signifies the brightening of the intellect. In this initial stage the seeker is asked to enrich and

7. III. 118. 13-44.
8. III. 118. 15.
9. III. 118. 16.
10. *Yoga-vāśiṣṭha Rāmāyaṇa*, VIa. 120. 1-8.

strengthen his intellect by poring over metaphysical literature of proved greatness and by remaining receptively close to the wise and the sagacious (*sādhu*).

(2) *Vicāraṇā* :

It is a philosophical investigation. This second stage is that of deep contemplation and thinking upon the problems posed by metaphysics.

(3) *Asaṅgabhāvanā* :

This stage represents meditation on one's detachment from the world. The seeker in this stage realises and affirms his detachment from all forms of worldly enjoyment.

(4) *Vilāpanī* :

This stage denotes extinction of desires. It marks a total extinction of all worldly desires.

(5) *Śuddhasaṁvinmayā* :

It is realisation of pure consciousness. The seeker in this stage realises not only pure consciousness but also intense joy.

(6) *Svasaṁvedanarūpā* :

This stage expresses self-luminousness. This stage of the seeker is now one of identification with and merger into his own consciousness. Bliss ineffable is the seeker's experience in this state. He

is suffused with it as he progresses towards his cherished goal.

(7) *Turīyā* :

It is a stage of Quiet and Peace. This seventh and the last stage is the attainment of liberation. The fruits of this state which the seeker enjoys are freedom from all agitation — a stage of equanimity and purity. Though a state, even beyond the seventh, is conceived and termed as the Ultimate *Nirvāṇa,* it is, in reality, a perfection of the seventh stage and cannot be enjoyed during life.

Three Stages : *Jāgrat, Svapna, and Suṣupti* :

Apropos of the above-mentioned stages, the first three represent the state of waking (*jāgrat*), the fourth is called dream (*svapna*), and the fifth and the sixth ones, in which intense joy is felt, are known as the state of dreamless sleep (*suṣupti*). During the first three stages the validity of the external world remains unaffected for the seeker, but with the exaltation of consciousness, the world progressively loses its reality, fading away gradually from before the seeker. But the world still persists in consciousness, though it is seen as unreal and as a shadow. In the next two stages, even the very memory of the world disappears. It is like a condition of oblivion of everything other than the Self. The fifth stage is that of an exuberance of joy, when the Self shines in its own glory. The

next two conditions are those of Self-revelation and Tranquillity.

The Third Account of the Stages (Yoga-bhūmis) in the Same Work :

There is a third account of the stages of Self-realisation in the same work[11] which we may sum up as follows :

(1) After passing through a number of the cycles of birth and death, the individual develops his discriminative consciousness. The unreality and worthlessness of the mundane existence looms large before him, accompanied by repentences that he has not lived his life properly. A strong desire, that he must have liberation from the earth-bound state, *i.e.*, he must rise above the inexorable cycle of birth and death, arises. To this end, he takes recourse to the studying books of genuinely spiritual import and close association with those who are good and wise. Moreover, he disciplines himself by performing noble actions avoiding all evil and cruel ones. Sensual pleasures and sins fill him with the strongest repulsion. He becomes virtuous and noble.

(2) The seeker then seeks guidance from and hearkens to well-known scholars, with whose aid he critically studies the *Vedas*, the *Smṛtis*, ethics,

11. VI. 126. pp. 4-13.

Yoga, and the rituals. He then acquires that discernment and comprehensive understanding which help him correctly to divide and classify all objects, and to judge whether an act is right or wrong. He also acquires a considerable freedom from pride, arrogance, delusion, avarice, etc., even though he may be seen apparently involved in them. The period synchronises with his full mastery of the secrets of all sciences and his understanding of the nature of things.[12]

(3) Having achieved these intellectual elevation, the seeker moulds his life in a new pattern. Solitude, austerity and devotion to the spiritual practices now distinguish his life. When he talks or enters into a discussion, his only topic is the ephemeral nature of the worldly existence, and from such talks his aversion to worldly life gets progressively intensified. His life now has only one rhythm and one end, that of complete detachment (*asaṅga*), which gives him the joy which he wishes for.[13]

(4) The passage through the previous three stages puts an end to the seeker's ignorance and it is then that his mind has a new dawn of the true knowledge. True knowledge lights his path to the realisation of the One, the Eternal Reality, whose indivisible omnipresence can be felt in everything and at all times. With the floodgates of the spirit-

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12. *Yoga-vāśiṣṭha Rāmāyaṇa*, VIa. 126. 15-18.
13. VIa. 126. 20-22.

ual vision now opened, and with the Omnipresent filling his gaze completely, the seeker cannot but think of the worldly objects only as figments of an unsubstantial dream.[14]

The *Yoga-vāśiṣṭha Rāmāyaṇa* adds that on account of the practice of the first three stages, pure gnosis arises in the fourth stage and reveals the Cosmic Unity.

(5) The seeker then arrives at the fifth stage of experience in which all manifestations of apparent diversity and difference are resolved and merged in the supreme Unity, which now becomes the only reality before his gaze. Profound joy fills his heart; its soft and soothing effect produces an almost trance-like state in him. Deep tranquillity, as it were, lulls him to sleep. Yet the seeker may, in this state, be active outwardly. In his inner life there is, however, no discontinuation of the unspeakable peace and joy which he feels.[15]

To sum up, the fifth stage emphasises the complete merger and resolution of all worldly differences and diversities in this all-embracing Unity. This finds a thrilling expression in the following verse in *Yoga-vāśiṣṭha Rāmāyaṇa* :

yatra nāsanna sadrūpo nāhaṁ nāpyanahaṅkṛtiḥ ..
kevalaṁ kṣīṇamananamāste dvaitaikyanirgataḥ .
nirgranthiḥ śāntasandeho jīvanmukto vibhāvanaḥ ..

14. VIa. 126. 58-70.
15. VIa. 126. 62-65.

anirvāṇo'pi nirvāṇaścitradīp iva sthitaḥ.
antaḥ śūnyo bahiḥ śūnyaḥ śūnyaḥ kumbha ivāmbare ..
antaḥ pūrṇo bahiḥ pūrṇaḥ pūrṇaḥ kumbha ivārṇave .
kiñcidevaiṣa sampannastvatha vaiṣa na kiñcana ..[16]

We could paraphrase the verse in the following manner :

A stage is then reached in the seeker's progressive refinement of experience when to him all distinctions between being and non-being and between self and non-self are blurred. The downward pull of worldly experience is completely neutralised. The mind is fully liberated and transcends the bounds of both duality and unity. The seeker's life in the world continues, however, though he enjoys absolute freedom from all desires and doubts. It is a state in which the seeker has the nearest and closest approximation to the Absolute, without, however, being fully merged in it. It is a state which can be described both negatively and positively. Negatively, the freedom from all desires, thoughts, and imagination makes the seeker void both within and without — a state the analogy of which can be drawn from an empty jar in empty space. On the other hand, looking at this state from the positive angle, we find the seeker full, both within and without, because of his having arrived at a very close approximation with the Ultimate Reality, which is the essence of all things —

16. VIa. 126. 66-69.

a state the analogy of which can be drawn from a full jar in an ocean.

(6) The sixth stage, an elaboration of the preceding one, is above being and non-being, self and not-self, and unity and duality — it is, in fact, above the process of the logical mind, and is free from all doubts and misgivings.

(7) The seventh and the last stage is truly described as Eternal Peace and is inexpressible in human language. It is essentially the attainment of the *Brahman* Itself.

agamyā vacasāṁ śāntā sā sīmā bhavabhūmiṣu .
nityamavyapadeśyā'pi kathañcidupadiśyate ..
muktireṣocyate rāma brahmaitatsamudāhṛtam .
nirvāṇametatkathitaṁ pūrṇātpūrṇatarākṛti ..[17]

It may be paraphrased in the following words:

Beyond that is the Absolute Experience (the end and consummation of all the stages of becoming). It is the state of the 'peace that passeth all comprehension'. Yet it is achieved through instruction and training. It is synonymous with Liberation. It is the realisation of *Brahman*, and the attainment of *Nirvāṇa*. Its fullness is above all measure.[18]

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17. VIa. 126, 71, 73 ; III. 9, 25.

18. Atreya, B.L. : *The Philosophy of Yoga-Vāṣiṣṭha*, pp. 489-497. An account of these stages also occurs in the *Jīvanmukti-viveka* by Vidyāraṇya Svāmi (Poona Edition, pp. 345-348), and Narahari's *Bodhasāra*.

Analysis of the Five States of Experience of a Practical Mystic on the Great Way (Mahāpatha) in the Āgamas :

In the *Āgamas* we find detailed analysis of the experiences of a dedicated mystic on the 'Great Way' (*mahāpatha*) of Liberation. In the *Mālinī Vijayottara*, for instance, these experiences are classified under five heads and are given a very rational interpretation. The five states are named respectively : (1) Bliss (*ānanda*), (2) Upward motion (*udbhava*), (3) Trepidation (*kampa*), (4) Sleep (*nidrā*), and (5) Revolving motion (*ghūrṇi*). It is said that the sense of identity which one feels with the not-self, *i.e.*, the body, senses, mind, etc., becomes a hindrance (*bandha*) only when it presupposes the existence of a corresponding sense of not-self in the Self. What is known as liberation (*mukti*) is, in reality, nothing but a removal of and rising above this limitation. The fundamental limitation, which constitutes the primary bondage upon the Self, is the atomicity (*aṇutva*) or spontaneous imposition upon itself of a monadic character by the all-pervading Universal Self. It manifests itself as loss of Freedom to the Principle of Consciousness, and *vice versa* as loss of Consciousness to the Principle of Freedom. These two are really identical corresponding respectively to the Self, appearing in Consciousness as not-self, and the not-self as Self. The removal of this dual sense, which restores the Self to its lost sovereignty is effected in the following successive stages :

(1) *Ānanda* :

When the self is directed towards the Absolute, it experiences 'delight' (*ānanda*), loses its sense of

false identity with what is other than itself, *i.e.*, the physical organs, etc., and is no longer regarded as not-self. It sheds off its non-self character, becomes disembodied for the time being, and begins to ascend to the pure space of consciousness.

(2) *Udbhava* :

This is called the 'upward motion' (*udbhava*). In this condition, the disembodied motion is dissociated from all its lower states, and the self and body are realised as separate. This results in the accretion of strength (*bala*) to the conscious self, though only for a short duration. But henceforth it expresses itself as '*I*'. In other words, consciousness becomes transformed into self-consciousness.

(3) *Kampa* :

The physical frame, being deprived of the support it received from the self, begins 'to tremble' (*kampa*) and is soon out of the seeker's field of consciousness.

(4) *Nidrā* :

On the elimination of the shackling sense of the self's identity with the body, and on its turning towards pure consciousness, a quiescent state like that of 'deep slumber' (*nidrā*) steals over the self ; all the outgoing activities of the mind cease altogether. Neither do any internal activities appear.

(5) *Ghūrṇi* :

The *nidrā* is succeeded by the supreme vision of the Absolute Truth, the realisation that Consciousness (*cit*) or Self alone exists, and that the world as distinct from consciousness has no existence. The perfect realisation of this state causes an awakening of the Supreme Power in the Self. *Ghūrṇi*, by which term this state is designated and which literally would mean the 'revolving motion', represents the state of the manifestation of the Self-power (*nijā-śakti* or *svarūpa-śakti* or *spanda*) of the Self. On the attainment of this condition, the seeker becomes—in spite of, as well as because of his stillness and transcendence—the agent of an endless process of creation and dissolution continuing through eternity. In other words, his union with the Divine becomes complete.[19]

The unique state of *ghūrṇi* may be compared in respect of some of its features with the condition indicated by the term *āśraya-parāvṛtti* of the Yogācāra Buddhist literature [20], with the picture of 'eternal creation' in St. Augustine, and with the 'perpetual birth of Christ' in Christian mysticism in general. This is, in the Āgamic mystic terminology, the Unlimited Self-expansion or Lordship (*mahāvyāpti*).

In the earlier state, however, an intense joy (*ānanda*) pervades the inner being of the seeker under

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19. Abhinavagupta : *Tantrāloka,* V. pp. 100-111.

20. See Asaṅga : *Mahāyāna Sūtrālaṅkāra-sūtra* with a glossary by Vasubandhu.

the unique touch of Absolute Perfection (*pūrṇatā*). The twofold limitation, mentioned earlier, does not cease during this blissful state; but as soon as the egoistic consciousness expressing itself through the body, etc., disappears, the light of Self-knowledge in which the Self is truly apprehended in its own nature shines in the soul in a momentary flash. The illumination is sudden and does not persist in the subsequent normal condition. When the flash ceases to exist, the distinction reappears, first of the egoism, and then of its dispositions in the body, etc. With the travails over, in the end, however, Self-knowledge becomes permanently established in the self. This is the Great Conversion (*mahāvyāpti*) which is accomplished only when all the *five* signs,[21] mentioned above, manifest themselves one after the other. If only one particular sign appears, the seeker almost abruptly assumes control over only the centre and the region concerned.

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21. According to some authorities, the number is *ten* instead of five, but they are all subsumed under the fivefold group. The first nine out of the ten states are as follows: (*i*) *kampa*, (*ii*) *bhrama*, (*iii*) *ghūrṇi*, (*iv*) *plavana*, (*v*) *sthiratā*, (*vi*) *citprakāśa*, (*vii*) *ānanda*, (*viii*) *divyadṛṣṭi*, and (*ix*) *camatkāra*. As soon as the *tenth* state is achieved, on account of the seeker's penetration into the Unmanifest Divine, the soul is released from its bondage for ever.

CHAPTER IX

THE BUDDHIST CONCEPTION OF SPIRITUAL LIFE

The ideal of Truth — Birth of human soul ; the Ten Hindrances (*saṁyojanas*) — Four stages of spiritual life according to Buddhism : (i) *Srotāpanna,* (ii) *Sakṛdāgāmin,* (iii) *Anāgāmin,* and (iv) *Arhat* — Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna views — The Ten Stages (*daśa-bhūmis*) : (1) *Pramuditā,* (2) *Vimalā,* (3) *Prabhākarī,* (4) *Arciṣmatī,* (5) *Sudurjayā,* (6) *Abhimukhī,* (7) *Duraṅgamā,* (8) *Acalā,* (9) *Sādhumatī,* and (10) *Dharmameghā* — The Perfect State of Buddhahood.

The Ideal of Truth :

The mystic approach to Self-realisation deeply affected the Indian religious faiths other than Hinduism and a special importance was attached to mysticism by most of them. Buddhism, likewise, as one of India's greatest religious faiths, came directly under the influence of mysticism. Even a cursory glance at the history of Buddhist spiritual thought in India during the last two millenia and a half would make it clear

that mysticism in most of its aspects was assigned a prominent place in its culture. If the personal realisation of an immediate nature of the Supreme Truth, obtained along a prescribed path, is the best of mystic consciousness, there is no doubt that there was a regular culture of it among the Buddhists in ancient and medieval India. The Buddha himself was one of the greatest mystics the world has ever produced and many of his followers, not only in his lifetime but for a number of centuries after his *mahā-parinirvāṇa*, devoted their lives and energy to a pursuit of this great ideal, viz., the ideal of an immediate experience of Truth.

Birth of Human Soul ; The Ten Hindrances (saṁyojanas) :

The Buddhist religious literature declares that the human soul is from its very birth subject to the action of the dark force called ignorance (*avidyā*), which operates in the form of the ten obstacles in the path of a man's spiritual achievement. These fetters or hindrances which bind man to the earth are designated by the term *saṁyojanas* and are categorised as follows :

(1) The delusion of a personal self (*satkāyadṛṣṭi*) breeding conceit and egoism, is the initial obstacle. This delusion arises out of the perverted realisation that there is no permanent self and that everything which exists is a collocation or aggregation of composite organisms (*skandhas*). This is liable to lead us

into the path of arrogant self-indulgence. This obstacle is dangerous and must be overcome.

(2) The evil of scepticism (*vicikitsā*) is the second hurdle. It is quite evident that this evil propensity needs be curbed and liquidated.

(3) The third obstacle is a blind belief in the efficacy of the ceremonials and rituals. The rituals of the elaborate purificatory rites are useless, nay delusive, simply because these do not help us at all to free ourselves from the evils of lust, hatred, and ignorance.

A man who successfully overcomes the delusion of the ego, doubt in the Buddha and his doctrines, and belief in the ceremonial rites, is said to have covered the first stage in the noble path, *i.e.*, he becomes the *srotāpanna*, the 'stream-entrant'. About this state the *Dhammapada* has the following description :

'Better than supremacy over the earth, better than a seat in heaven,

Better than a rule over the worlds, is the fruit of the first step in the path of holiness.[1]

No wonder, it is further described that a coverage of this stage entitles a man to be one with the Holy Ones in the spiritual path and precludes the possibility of a rebirth.

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1. *pathavyā ekarajjena saggasa gamanena vā .*
sabbalokādhipaccena sotāpattiphalaṁ varam ..
Dhammapada, 178

(4) and (5) The next two are the obstacles of delusion of the senses or sensuality (*kāma*), animus and ill-will (*pratigha*). These must also be conquered. On overcoming these great foes within him, the man attains the second stage of the noble path, *i.e.*, he becomes the 'once-returner' (*sakṛdāgāmin*); to him is promised the prospect of just another rebirth and no more. On arrival at this stage the man's inner defects are drastically minimised though not fully abolished, and that is why the absolute release from the mortal coil is promised to him only after another existence.

(6) and (7) The sixth and seventh hurdles may be described as attachment to life on earth, and the desire for a future life. When the man is able to crush these two evils in him, he proves that his spiritual progress has elevated him above the world of desires (*rāga*). The reward, thus, is promised to him that he will never return to the realm of desires. He thus becomes fit to hold the title of 'non-returner' (*anāgāmin*).

(8), (9), and (10) The impediments yet to be overcome are pride (*māna*), self-righteousness (*auddhatya*), and ignorance of the true nature of things (*ajñāna*). When these hindrances, the last three fetters that bind the soul and pull it down towards the earth, are rendered completely harmless, the man reaches the goal, becoming an *arhat*[2] (literally, 'worthy') and attains the

2. '*Arhat*' is a common word, used even in the pre-Buddhistic times, to denote a rare soul who has attained the true goal of his religion.

dual bliss of *nirvāṇa* and *pari-nirvāṇa*, *i.e.*, one who will never be reborn. Through the crusade against the forces of evil, the resolute soul succeeds in rendering the seeds of suffering completely exhausted, and all that tars his soul is washed away. After the attainment of *arhat*-hood, he, a liberated soul, continues to live in this world. But after death, he never suffers rebirth. In the heart of peace, he dwells, pure, free, and assured of *pari-nirvāṇa*.

These hindrances are ingrained in the human nature and they must be removed from it, if Supreme-realisation is to be achieved. The supreme ideal before a true Buddhist saint has even been the gaining of complete freedom from pain and misery that permeate this world and that are incidental to one's mundane life (included in which are not only human and subhuman existence but also several varieties of superhuman existence).

Four Stages of Spiritual Life :

The stages in the mystic's progressive spiritual ascent, according to the Buddhist spiritual lore, make interesting and edifying reading. The spiritual life of a mystic is initiated by a qualifying ceremony in which the individual is required to surrender himself completely to the grace of the *Buddha* or to the *Kalyāṇamitra,* the teacher representing the Buddha. Then come the four successive stages of the spiritual life through which the mystic has to pass. The stages

come in the following order : (*i*) *srotāpanna,* (*ii*) *sakṛdāgāmin,* (*iii*) *anāgāmin*, and (*iv*) *arhat*. To reach these successive stages, the earthly fetters have to be broken, *i.e.*, the hindrances created by our material existence in our path to spiritual salvation have to be overcome through effort and discipline. About these fetters, we have given above a fairly detailed exposition. Here we describe in a fuller manner the states themselves, and by summing up the discussion, bring down the curtain on the Buddhist conception of the mystic path.

(*i*) *Srotāpanna* :

Literally meaning, the 'stream-entrant,' this stage represents the condition of having taken a plunge into the stream of holiness which carries one ultimately to the perfection of an *arhat* or a *jīvanmukta*. The position may be elucidated by referring to the Buddhistic conception of sainthood. The merit of a saint in Buddhism depends on his ability to eliminate the fetters of the mundane life. When all the fetters are broken, the man reaches the goal of spiritual life. He is then free from desires, aversions, infatuations, and all other moral shortcomings.

The first stage in the mystic path corresponds to the destruction of the first three fetters. The rebirth of an individual on this plane or even on a higher plane depends on the bondage exercised by one or the other of

these fetters, so that when all the fetters are destroyed, man soars beyond the inexorable cycles of birth, death, and rebirth. The plunge into the stream of holiness, referred to above, is initiated by the grace of the Buddha and has the merit of bringing the process of rebirth to an end. The importance of personal initiative at this stage is by no means small. Even with the Grace, if it is not accompanied by individual effort, it is likely to require seven lives in succession to realise Perfection. But if the aspirant makes a sincere and dedicated effort and exerts himself to the full, the period of waiting is so drastically reduced that it becomes possible to ascend to the highest state in this very life, *i.e.*, even before one's death.

(*ii*) *Sakṛdāgāmin* :

Literally meaning, the 'once-returner', this stage means that with the destruction of the first three fetters, followed by appropriate culture, the individual has reached a point from where just another life on this plane will be required to enable him to rise to a higher level of consciousness. As soon as the second stage is crossed, the fear of returning to the lowest world of desires altogether disappears. But the necessity of assuming a new form of existence to continue the thread of evolution on the higher plane, and a yearning for it, do persist.

(*iii*) *Anāgāmin* :

Literally meaning, the 'non-returner', this stage signifies a condition of spiritual progress in which the seeker, already elevated high, is no longer required to come down to the earth.

(*iv*) *Arhat* :

Literally meaning, the 'worthy one', who has removed all worldly attachments ; the term is used for the final stage. When the aspirant, after success in the previous stages, enters into the portals of the next, *i.e.*, the stage of *arhat*, the necessity of continued evolution on the higher plane also disappears. It is the state of complete spiritual freedom. The physical frame (*skandha*), after an attainment of this level of elevation, continues until death. Thereafter there is *nirvāṇa*, in which the personal consciousness of the individual being is transmuted into a stream of undefiled consciousness, luminous by nature and free from all dispositions (*saṁskāras*) and all traces of ignorance (*avidyā*).

Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna Views :

As we have already said, the Buddhist religious literature contains an elaborate account of the stages of a seeker's spiritual progress. Of the two great schools of Buddhism, the Hīnayāna and the Mahāyāna,

the former pinpoints the goal as *pudgalaśūnyatā*. The Hīnayānists recognise, as shown above, the four distinct stages of *sotāpatti*, *sakṛdāgāmin*, *anāgāmin*, and *arhat*, each bearing with it the attainments and powers peculiar to it. The last stage, *i.e.*, the *arhat* represents the effulgence of perfect illumination. But the Mahāyānists, on the other hand, are of the opinion that though the attainment of *pudgala-śūnyatā* is a great step forward in the spiritual life, it does not mark the highest perfection, which according to them is *dharma-śūnyatā*. The Mahāyānists generally divide the spiritual path into ten stages (*daśa-bhūmi*), of which the first six correspond to the four states of the Hīnayānists, while the next four go further beyond. For an aspirant on the spiritual path according to the Hīnayānists, the impelling idea is the realisation of personal peace. But a *Mahāyāna-sādhaka* longs for the peace and happiness of the entire world. In other words, the Mahāyānists hold that it is not possible to do real good to the world unless and until one is able to do away with one's own separateness and individuality and attains a state of wisdom, in the light of which the Void (*śūnya*) that is the whole universe, is fully exposed.

The Ten Stages (*daśa-bhūmis*) :

The ten stages (*bhūmis*), referred to above, are described in the *Daśa-bhūmika-sūtras*. These may be enumerated as follows :

(1) *Pramuditā* :

Literally meaning, the 'joyful', the aspirant gains an entrèe into this stage only after his mind has been filled with the thought of Enlightenment (*bodhicitta*).[3] With the presence of the Supremely Enlightened Ones and of the Bodhisattva's career before his mental eye, he realises that though the fear that he may be born again and that too in a lower order is still lurking in his mind, he is assured of attaining the Buddhahood for the sake of all sentient beings. This is the emergence of a Bodhisattva whose heart dances to the rhythm of an inexpressible rapture. Such a soul develops many noble qualities, among which the Seven Factors of Enlightenment (*bodhi-aṅgāni*) and his taking of the Ten Great Vows (*mahā-praṇidhānas*) are worth mentioning. In this

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3. In the above context we should not take *bodhi* to mean either *śrāvaka-bodhi* or *pratyeka-bodhi* (which is the principal objective of the Hīnayāna school), but *samyak-sambodhi* or Supreme Enlightenment, the remarkably unique goal of Mahāyāna Buddhism. The term *citta,* being derived from the root *cit,* meaning 'to perceive', or to form an idea in mind, comes, to mean 'thought-idea'. The compound *bodhi-citta*, therefore, means the thought, or idea, or psyche of the Supreme Enlightenment. Judged from the point of view of denotative semantics, the word therefore belongs to psychology rather than to metaphysics. Nevertheless, there have been attempts at reading a metaphysical meaning into the word by describing it as the reflection of the Enlightenment which exists in the heart of every sentient being, thus identifying *bodhi-citta* with *bodhi* itself.

stage he fully devotes himself to the practice of Giving, (the same as what *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* would describe as *datta*), which is at once the first Perfection (hence, the term *dāna-pāramitā* for it), and the first of the Means of Conversion (*saṁgrahavastu*).

(2) *Vimalā* :

Literally meaning, the 'immaculate', it is attained by purity of conduct and moral rectitude. In this *bhūmi*, the Bodhisattva develops ten *cittāśayas*, viz., plain (*ṛju*), soft (*mṛdu*), pliable (*karmaṇya*), submissive (*dama*), tranquil (*śama*), beneficial (*kalyāṇa*), unclogged (*asaṁsṛṣṭa*), indifferent (*anapekṣa*), noble (*udāra*), and magnanimous (*māhātmya*). He then in an ever-vigilant manner abides by the Ten Ways of Wholesome Action; *i.e.*, he shuns as poison the following wicked actions, *e.g.*, killing (*prāṇātipāta*), stealing (*adattādāna*), sexual misconduct (*kāmamithyācāra*), lying (*anṛtavacana*), malignant speech (*piśunavacana*), harsh speech (*paruṣavacana*), and frivolous talks (*saṁbhinnapralāpa*), and becomes instead non-avaricious (*anabhidhyā*), devoid of malevolence (*avyāpannacitta*), and comes to possess the right view (*samyagdṛṣṭi*). He exhorts others to do the same. The Bodhisattva also observes the good deeds performed (*kuśalakarmapathas*) and persuades others to do so, becomes loving and compassionate towards all beings, and resolves to become a teacher and rescue all beings. While

he does not neglect other Perfections, he holds the Perfection of Morality (*śīla-pāramitā*) as most important and pays to it his best attention; he also practises the second means of Conversion (*saṁgrahavastu*), which is Loving Speech or Affability (*priyavāditā*).

(3) *Prabhākarī* :

Literally meaning, the 'illuminating', this indicates the stage in which the natural refulgence of the Bodhisattva's mind breaks forth unclouded by any adventitious defilements. The Bodhisattva feels it in all intensity that the fire of lust, hatred, and delusion is burning in him, from which he develops a deep disgust for all worldly things. Longing more intensely than ever for Supreme Enlightenment, he devotes himself to the study of the scriptures and the practice of meditation. He experiences the four *dhyānas*; the four "formless attainments", *i.e.*, four successive stages of superconsciousness; the four *brahmavihāras*; and the six higher knowledges (*abhijñās*). Though the religious texts describe the Bodhisattva as specializing in the practice of the Perfection of Patience (*kṣānti-pāramitā*), it is obvious from the trend of his progression towards perfection that in this *bhūmi*, the Bodhisattva is more concerned with the Perfection of Meditation (*dhyāna-pāramitā*) than with anything else. The discrepancy, obviously, is due to the lingering influence of the categories

of the Threefold Path. At this stage, the Bodhisattva practises the third Means of Conversion (*saṁgrahavastu*), *i.e.*, of Doing Good (*arthacaryā* or *arthakriyā*).

(4) *Arciṣmatī* :

Literally meaning, the 'blazing', this is so called because in this *bhūmi* the Bodhisattva consumes the twin painted veils, the 'coverings' (*āvaraṇas*) of pollution and ignorance by an application of the rays of the *bodhipakṣya dharmas*, the thirty-seven principles that are the milestones on the path of Enlightenment. The Light of the Doctrine (*dharmāloka*) now flashes before him, after his having obtained insight into the realm of the sentient beings (*sattvadhātus*), of the various worlds (*lokadhātus*), of the universe (*dharmadhātu*), of space (*ākāśadhātu*), of consciousness (*vijñānadhātu*), of desires (*kāmadhātus*), of form (*rūpadhātu*), of formlessness (*ārūpyadhātu*), of noble intention and inspiration (*udārādhyāśayādhimuktidhātu*), and of magnanimous intention and aspiration (*māhātmyādhyāśayādhimuktidhātu*).

It is remarkable, indeed, that despite his having already reached a high spiritual altitude in the previous *bhūmis,* it is only at this stage that the Bodhisattva succeeds in casting off the wrong ideas bred by the notion of the permanence of *ātman*. Applying steadfastly to the cultivation and development of the Perfection of Vigour (*vīryapāramitā*), the Bodhisattva in this *bhūmi* radiates

the spiritual energy to all others, just as the sun radiates heat and light on the solar system. He also practises Exemplification (*samānārthatā*), the fourth Means of Conversion (*saṁgrahavastu*).

(5) *Sudurjayā*

Literally meaning, the 'very difficult to conquer,' it refers more particularly to the Bodhisattva than to the stage. *Māra,* the symbol of evil, is now on the retreat against the invincible spiritual armour of the Bodhisattva. The Bodhisattva by now has acquired a full purity and equanimity (*cittāśayaviśuddhisamatā*) with regard to: his knowledge of the cardinal doctrines (*dharmas*) of the past, present, and future Buddhas; moral precepts, mental discipline including meditation, purging of wrong views and doubts; discernment of the right and the wrong paths; practice of the principles and pursuit of the doctrines conducive to Enlightenment (*bodhi*); and the duty of spiritually elevating all beings. By these means, he so upgrades his proficiency and opens his intuitive sight that he is able to realise and understand not only the Four Truths (*catvārī ārya-satyāni*), but also the various other manifestations and degrees of Truth, viz., ranging from the relative truth and the Absolute Truth to the Truth of the Origin of the *Tathāgata*-knowledge. This in turn enables him to realise the inanity and utterly non-essential nature of phenomena and the futility

of indulgence in worldliness; he pities those ignorant ones who are bond-slaves to lust and pride. In this stage he devotes himself ardently to the Perfection of Meditation (*dhyāna-pāramitā*), practises all the four Means of Conversion (*saṁgrahavastus*), viz., *dāna, priyavāditā, arthacaryā*, and *samānārthatā*, acquires a knowledge of all the arts and sciences, *i.e.*, all secular knowledge, and is blessed by the *devas* with the various *dhāraṇīs* which protect him when he preaches the Doctrine.

(6) *Abhimukhī* :

Literally meaning, the 'face to face', it is so called because in this stage the Bodhisattva has, as it were, a frontal and close view of Reality. There dawns upon him the absolute sameness of all phenomena in ten different ways; viz., in respect of their being in all alikeness 'baseless' (*animitta*); devoid of any signs (*alakṣaṇa*); unoriginated or unborn (*ajāta*); detached (*vivikta*); pure from the very beginning (*ādiviśuddha*); inexpressible (*niṣprapañca*); neither accepted nor rejected (*anāyūhaniryūha*); similar to a dream, an optical illusion, the reflection of the moon in water, and an echo (*māyāsvapnapratibhāsapratiśrutkopama*); and the identity (literally non-duality) of existence and non-existence (*bhāvābhāvādvaya*).

The Bodhisattva has thus the unique ten-

fold comprehension of the formula operating behind the mortal coils that are sometimes termed as the Conditioned Co-production, which exposes unmistakably the germs of defilement and descent as originating in our own consciousness. He further realizes that the pest of suffering grows without there being any doer or feeler (*kārakavedakarahita*), and that the three worlds, thought-constructions as they appear, are in reality the immanence of the Absolute Mind (*cittamātra yad idaṁ traidhātukam*). He apprehends Reality under its three modes, the Signlessness, the Desirelessness, and the Emptiness, and serenely proceeds to achieve the corresponding Emancipations. In this *bhūmi*, the Bodhisattva is represented as having gained, in addition to the indispensable attributes of a Bodhisattva, all the qualities of an *arhat*. He particularly devotes himself to the Perfection of Wisdom (*prajñā-pāramitā*).

This is where there is a parting of ways between the Hīnayānists and the Mahāyānists. From the seventh *bhūmi* onwards, the Mahāyānist metaphysics comprehends the attempts of the Bodhisattva to gain a clear view of the two cardinal negative states, *dharma-śūnyatā* and *nirnimittatā*, of all things in our world of cognition, until through a progressive perfection of knowledge the aspirant reaches the consummation, the *Tathāgatabhūmi* in which he becomes a perfect *Tathāgata* and is merged in the other *Tathāgatas*.

(7) *Dūraṅgamā* :

Literally meaning, the 'far-going', it is so called because commencing from this *bhūmi,* the Bodhisattva, transcending the final limits set up by the Hīnayāna school, rises to a superior path leading to Supreme Enlightenment, or in other words, the goal of the One Way of the Mahāyāna. This is a crucial point in the progress of the Bodhisattva, because from now onwards the stages of his progress lie beyond our ken and beyond our power of representation. The Bodhisattva has attained Emancipation, but he has had no personal *nirvāṇa,* he being now an impersonal cosmic force, part and parcel of the transcendental and omnipresent *dharmakāya*; his activities from this point are likewise similar. Truly, from now onwards his activities are no more that of an individual. That we mortals still see him functioning as an individual is an illusion to which we are subject owing to the impurities that defile our powers of cognition.

The *Sūtras* would have us believe, though an implicit faith in the denotative value of their language would be uncalled for, that from this stage the Bodhisattva proceeds along the Mahāyānic path armed with the tenfold knowledge of Skilful Means (*upāyaprajñājñāna*). In spite of his great powers, meditation, and knowledge of expedients, not even for a moment does he remain detached from the activities related to the Path

(*mārga-abhinirhāra*) and those related to knowledge (*jñānābhirhāra*).

In short, the Bodhisattva fully manifests himself to the world, though remaining serenely dissociated from everything. He realises the Ten Perfections (*daśa-pāramitās*), the four Means of Conversion (*saṁgrahavastus*), the four Resolutions (*adhiṣṭhānas*), and the thirty-seven principles (*bodhipakṣika dharmas*) that pave the Way to Enlightenment. The Bodhisattva courses majestically along the ten paths of melioristic action of a Supreme Buddha. Spontaneously he demonstrates his mastery of the various arts and sciences, already learnt and mastered fully in the fifth stage, so that he naturally assumes the teachership of the beings of the three thousand worlds. It is the time, too, when the Bodhisattva fulfils his Great Vow to relieve the world of suffering, without being contaminated by the world. We see him on the various planes of mundane life, even as subject to the snares of *Māra*. But his mental detachment ever remains complete.

The Bodhisattva is thus in everything and at the same time out of everything, simply because his heart is full of yearning for all sentient beings, for their release from worldly suffering. There is never any abatement of his true spiritual glory. Yet it is out of the ineffable compassion of his heart that he willingly condescends, if necessary, to assume the form of a *śrāvaka*,

of a *pratyekabuddha*, or even of an evil-doer or of a disciple of a heretical teacher. But through all this he remains steadfast in his *prajñājñāna-vicāraṇabhūmi*, with his *buddhajñāna* completely unaffected. In this *bhūmi*, thus, the Perfection of Skilful Means (*upāyakauśalapāramitā*) is the object of his spiritual cultivation.

(8) *Acalā* :

Literally meaning, the 'immovable', it is a *bhūmi* of great significance, in which the Bodhisattva, after purifying his path (*mārga*) through the twin lights of knowledge and expedients, collecting merit, taking his great vows, and fully grounding himself in the four strata of virtues (*satya*, *tyāga*, *upāsanā*, and *prajñā*) and many other similar achievements, enters into the region of an unswerving faith that everything is illusory, without origin, and without any of the values that are usually assigned to them. The thought-constructions, *i.e.*, the causation and non-causation of things, disappear. All *dharmas*, likewise, appear the same to him, like space (*ākāśa*). In short, he has now entered into that *bhūmi* where the 'thatness' of things (*tathatā*) is clearly manifest to him ; the name given to the *bhūmi* is thus significantly a complete acquiescence, and faith in the unoriginatedness of phenomena (*anutpattika-dharma-kṣānti*).

At his stage the Buddhas now ask him to fulfil his Great Vow, once and for all. They ask

him not to relapse into personal *nirvāṇa,* but on the other hand, think of the welter of affliction, delusion, and chaos to which the minds of ignorant people are being subjected, and his duty towards them. They further encourage him to acquire like them an immeasurable body, worlds, refulgence, purity of voice and limbs, insight into the ten worlds, Buddha-field (*buddha-kṣetra*), beings and varieties of *dharmas* of the ten corners of the universe, all of which are indispensable to the Supreme Enlightenment (*samyaksambodhi*). The acquisition of these 'immeasurables' is of supreme importance. In the previous *bhūmis,* the merits and powers were acquired through effort. But in this, the eighth *bhūmi,* the 'immeasurables' are acquired spontaneously, and are far surpassing the previously acquired merits and powers.

The Bodhisattva is now omniscient (*sarvajña*). His knowledge of expedients (*upāyakauśalyajñāna*) enables him to understand in a full and correct measure the entire process of the evolution and involution of the universe, and the minutest details about the composition of its elements and the nature of its beings. He is now, in every way, in possession of all the qualities of a Buddha, on account of which the possibility of any future retrogression is permanently prevented. Yet he lives in the midst of the sentient beings just as one of them, simply because like a pillar of light he always guides them and inspirits them to feel that for a sentient being it is never impossible to become a Buddha.

So important is this *bhūmi*, in which the Perfection of Vows (*praṇidhāna-pāramitā*) is carried to its final stage, that the Bodhisattva now possesses the knowledge, the attributes of which are inconceivable, incomparable, and immeasurable. So too are his actions, stainless and perfect. Hence it is that this stage is termed as the stage of Perfection, Birth, and Finality. The Bodhisattva is now a member of the Buddha-family, one within the fold of the *Buddhagotra*. He is now firmly entrenched in the sphere of excellence from which there can be no going back (*avivartyabhūmi*). All the gods and *vajrapāṇis* are henceforth in constant attendance upon him.

(9) *Sādhumatī* :

Literally meaning, 'good thoughts', it is so called because in this *bhūmi*, which comes after the perfection achieved in the previous *acalā bhūmi*, the Bodhisattva is seen as the ideal teacher, as one possessing good thoughts on account of the Analytical Knowledge already mastered. Since this Analytical Knowledge plays a part of supreme importance in this *bhūmi*, we need to know it in all its aspects. The first is the knowledge of the phenomena in regard to both its appearance and reality (*dharmapratisaṁvid*); the second, the knowledge of the meaning and characteristics of the phenomena, including that of the various categories of the Doctrine (*arthasaṁvid*); the third, the knowledge of etymology, linguistics, public speaking, and literary composition for the purpose of

avoidance of ambiguity and tendentiousness in preaching (*niruktipratisaṁvid*); and the fourth, the knowledge and mastery of ready address, and of the correlation between the context and the preaching (*pratibhānapratisaṁvid*).

Similarly, the Bodhisattva in this *bhūmi* acquires knowledge of the distinctive characteristics of all *dharmas* and the duties of the *śrāvakas, pratyeka-buddhas, bodhisattvas,* and *buddhas*. Further, he knows thoroughly all the thoughts and desires of men, even in their minutest particulars, and is able to preach to them in an idiom and style befitting their differing degrees of understanding and ability. As the preacher of *dharmas* (*dharmabhāṇakas*), he is not merely the receptacle of the various *dharma* utterances, but also the preserver and custodian of the doctrines of the Teacher. Moreover, by his continued and constant application to spiritual practices, he remains ever in the sight of the Buddha and develops the Perfection of Strength (*bala-pāramitā*).

(10) *Dharmameghā* :

Literally meaning, the 'cloud of the doctrine', it is the name given to the tenth and final *bhūmi*. It is plausible, as an authority interprets the term, that the *bhūmi* is so called because it is pervaded by various *samādhis* and *dhāraṇis*. More plausibly, it is so named because in this *bhūmi* the Bodhisattva becomes possessed of the power and strength which enables him to hold all

dharmas showered upon him by the innumerable Buddhas. The Bodhisattva, in this *bhūmi*, as has been said above, is the master of a countless number of *samādhis* and *dhāraṇis*; and as a result of this there appears an infinitely splendid jewel-adorned lotus of an inconceivable size, on which the Bodhisattva, with a matching radiance, appears seated in the *samādhi* of the consecration of Omniscience (*sarvajñajñānaviśeṣābhiṣeka*). He is surrounded by countless Bodhisattvas, all still in the midst of the lower nine *bhūmis*. They have their eyes steadfastly fixed upon him. The radiance (*raśmi*) issuing from his body fills the hearts of all sentient beings with joy. While he is thus seated in the resplendent lotus-seat, rays come forth from all Buddhas and consecrate him as a *Tathāgata* and a *Samyaksambuddha*, endowed with Omniscience. Hence this stage is called the stage of consecration (*abhiṣekabhūmi*). The Bodhisattva, now a Supreme Buddha, has reached the "endless end" of his career. He is now the master of all the expedients of memory (*smṛtikauśalya*). Having practised in this stage the Perfection of knowledge (*jñāna-pāramitā*), he performs all kinds of miracles and takes innumerable Celestial Forms through which, in fulfilment of His Great Original Vow, he henceforth dedicates himself to the emancipation of all sentient beings.[4]

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4. For a detailed description see *Survey of Buddhism*, by Bhikku Sangharaksitā, and *Aspects of Mahayana Buddhism and its relation to Hinayana*, by N. Dutta.

The Perfect State of Buddhahood :

This last stage, also known as *Paramavihāra* in its perfection, marks the consummation of the spiritual ascent of a Bodhisattva and attainment of the zenith, the Buddhahood. We shall not be at all far from the truth in saying that the entire spiritual progress is, recounted through the ten stages just described, is an allegory of the mystic's progressive development. It is said that as soon as the mystic enters the tenth stage, he finds himself seated like a Bodhisattva on a lotus of infinite light, with an infinitely resplendent body and surrounded by a countless host of mystics and adepts still struggling through the earlier stages. He is established in the *samādhi* of Omniscience (*prajñā*) and Compassion (*karuṇā*) so that the rays rising from his body make all beings happy and guide the steps of the mystics coming in his trail. When he is thus seated on the lotus, rays come forth from the *Tathāgatas* and consecrate him (*abhiṣeka*) as a perfectly enlightened Buddha (*samyaksambuddha*).

Chapter X

THE JAINA VIEW OF SPIRITUAL PROGRESS

Vardhamāna and his spiritual discipline — The Jaina theory of *Pudgala* — The Jaina theory of the Soul and its assumption of Form — Origin and two types of Karmans, *ghātin* and *aghātin*, and their relation to the soul — The Jaina Theory of 'Colouration' (*leśyās*) of the souls — Concept of *Triratna* or *Ratnatraya* — Meditation and five *Parameṣṭhis* — The fourteen spiritual stages (*Guṇasthānas*) according to Jainism — The state of liberation and beyond — The Jaina concept of *Paramātman*.

The Jaina religious faith, its ethics, epistemology, and ontological speculations occupy an important position in the variegated history of man's essential quest, in our land of many religions and still more philosophical doctrines. It is, therefore, obvious that a reference to Jainism has an indispensable value of its own in the survey of the mystical currents flowing from time immemorial. However, the reference to Jainism in the present context cannot and should not mean a detailed survey of its religion and metaphysics. A limit has thus been deliberately imposed and only those aspects which are germane to the present enquiry are taken for discussion.

Vardhamāna and His Spiritual Discipline :

As a religious system, Jainism owes its origin to Vardhamāna Mahāvīra (599-527 B.C.), whose own intuitive experiences and spiritual victory earned for him the attribute of *Jina*, *i.e.*, the spiritual conqueror, and *Tīrthaṁkara, i.e.*, the discoverer of the path. But the sage confessed himself to be only an expounder of the tenets introduced by a succession of twenty-three earlier *Tīrthaṁkaras,* the first of whom, according to the Jaina lore, was Ṛṣabhadeva, a saint mentioned in *Yajurveda* and *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. The latter must have lived many centuries before the advent and enlightenment of Vardhamāna. Whatever it be, it is quite evident that Jainism originated in the peculiar social, ethical, and religious milieu of ancient India. Regarding the origin of it, it must be said that Jainism was influenced by almost all the factors which influenced Buddhism, and perhaps even by some of the *Upaniṣads,* which came into being contemporaneously with Jainism.

Hence it is just what is to be expected : Jainism has many points in common with the Buddhist, Upaniṣadic, and Vedāntic views. At the same time it has its own uniqueness too : it is a distinct religious system with a well-defined framework of epistemological, ethical, and metaphysical ideas which are fresh and original in outlook. All the same, its unique character is to be seen first in its refreshingly commonsense view of the problems connected with the ontology in which it pursues the doctrine of relative pluralism, denoted by the term *anekāntavāda*, which is basically

different from both the Vedāntic and Buddhistic outlooks. Moreover, coloured and impressed by this relative pluralism, its emphasis on the ethical path is of an original character. Its epistemology, likewise, stands independently by virtue of its original logic, relativistic conception of truth, and strong empirical outlook.

The Jaina Theory of Pudgala :

Pudgala means that which is liable to integration and disintegration. It denotes matter, and gets detailed attention in the Jaina theory of *mokṣa*. It stands apart from the use of the same term in the Buddhistic canons, in which the interpretation put upon it is completely different in character. These points we shall have the occasion to touch upon later. But in a work like the present one, we need hardly emphasise the validity of our including a chapter on the Jaina view of mysticism. From what we know from unimpeachable records, the life of the great Vardhamāna Mahāvīra, in its fundamentals, was the life of a great Self-realised soul. His *jina*-hood was the result of the mystic pursuit of Divine Intuition, in which he not only traversed the entire path, but had the direct intuition as well. He had that mystical flash in him on account of which the ultimate secrets of existence are, as we know, revealed to the great mystics of the world. His system of *yoga*, with its aim of a full knowledge of the Supreme Reality and its path of ethical imperatives, was the

fruit of his own realisation. Of the mystics of modern India whom we have selected for study in the present work, none belongs to the Jaina fold. But we cannot forget the essential spirit of assimilation and absorption of our land, on account of which the variety and diversity of life has always coalesced and harmonised to exert a composite influence upon the life of the people. In the development of mysticism in our land, whether that of the past or of the present, our culture in its integrity has a deep impress on it.

Vardhamāna attained the state of *kevala, i.e.*, he became perfect through his superlative ethical virtues and his steady pursuit of Reality (*sat*). That he reached this goal, became endowed with omniscience (*kevala-jñāna*), and finally attained complete emancipation and release (*mokṣa*), were all indisputable proofs of the fact that a man, living under the overhanging clouds of his *karmas* in a state of bondage, and rendered myopic as it were, does still carry in him an endless energy (*anantavīrya*) for right and good action, which only needs the timely initiative and urge to help him conquer all the *kārmic* forces, and thus gain complete liberation. In this great Jaina saint, the divine comedy of life, a victory over all obstacles, and the attainment of the highest goal found the most splendid enactment. Hence he is our beacon, the pillar of light, in understanding the Jaina tenets of *yoga,* self-purification, intuition, and liberation. Most of what we embody in the ensuing paragraphs will thus be basically what is radiated by the illuminated personality of Vardhamāna, though we must have repeated occasions to seek the

help of the learned expositors and commentators of Jaina religion and metaphysics who followed him.

The Jaina Theory of the Soul; Its Assumption of Form :

The Jainas too have their own scheme of self-purification and spiritual advancement. These are all in a sense varieties of *yoga,* though each has its own characteristic features. So far as the Jaina conception is concerned, it seems desirable to furnish a short summary of the theoretical and practical teachings of the sect, with the object of throwing some light on it. The soul, according to the system, is an immaterial principle endowed with eternal consciousness, bliss, potency, and other auspicious qualities. It is essentially conscious; but so long as these intrinsic qualities are not manifested under the obscuring influence of matter, it wanders about from life to life in search of peace and happiness, and passes through all the experiences of mundane existence. It is inherently capable of emancipation. This inherent capacity is not always roused to activity. It is only when the soul realises its great mission that it rises up to exert itself to fulfil it. The inspiration for emancipation, of course, comes from within. The Jainas do not believe in eternal revelation, like the Mīmāṁsakas or Vedāntins; but their sole reliance is on the inherent capacity of the soul to realise the Truth. The Jainas believe in those rare souls, the *Tīrthaṁkaras,* who only on their attainment of omniscience (*kevala-jñāna*) can guide a distressed soul in his journey of Self-realisation.

The way to perfection, according to the Jainas, lies through a gradual purification of the soul consequent on the elimination of material particles clinging to it and rendering it immune from fresh influx of matter. It is contended that, as the system does not commit itself to a theistic metaphysical scheme of the usual type, there is no scope for practical mysticism in it. This is far from the truth, for the Jainas too have their own conception of *Paramātman*, which, though not theistic, is yet far from atheistic. What is really needed is that the soul, :through a process of self-discipline, should reach up to its divine status and thereby attain the realisation of all its inherent possibilities. Communion with an external divine principle is not their aim. It is the restoration of every soul to its own intrinsic divinity that the system points to as its ideal.

The soul is in reality formless and invisible, but it is compelled to assume a form under the force of *karmans*. The assumption of form is really nothing but the combination of the soul with matter (*pudgala*). Matter is by nature distinct from the soul, but has a tendency to combine itself with it when the latter, as an agent of thought-activity (*cetana-karman*), draws it towards itself. Matter thus attached constitutes the material cause and the thought-activity (*cetana-karman*), the efficient cause (*bhāva-karman*) of the materialised *karman* (*pudgala* or *dravya-karman*) which is generated in the soul. As a matter of fact, the pure soul as such is never responsible for material *karmans* which bind it down. It is only the agent of its own spiritual activities or *bhāvas* which lower themselves down into *bhāva-karmans*. Activity is thus found to

have been conceded even in its purest condition, but it is not *karman,* nor does it give rise to pleasure and pain. Every soul, when free from contact with matter, enjoys the bliss characterising its consciousness.

Origin and Types of Karman and Their Relation to the Soul :

Karmans originate from the activity of body, mind, and speech (*kāya*, *manas*, and *vākya*) only when these are influenced by the following forces of —

(1) perversity of attitude or wrong belief, by which the purity of knowledge is vitiated (*mithyātva*),

(2) non-abstinence or non-renunciation (*avirati*),

(3) spiritual inertia or carelessness (*pramāda*),

(4) passions (*kaṣāya*), and the threefold activities of the body, the sense-organ of speech, and the mind (*yoga*) :

mithyādarśana-avirati-pramāda-kaṣāya-yoga-bandhahetavaḥ

The soul, according to the Jainas, is free and perfect; but due to its merits or demerits of action, it assumes body, and this embodiment of soul is due to the *karman*-matter, as mentioned earlier. The soul which is naturally pure and perfect is thus hampered by different kinds of *karman*-matter. These obstructions are of eight kinds, viz. :

(1) *Jñanāvaraṇa* :

It covers knowledge. It obscures and distorts the natural and inborn knowledge of the soul. It hampers the right knowledge of the soul.

(2) *Darśanāvaraṇa* :

It covers intuition and obscures right intuitions.

(3) *Mohanīya* :

It disturbs the right attitude of the soul and causes delusion, error, doubt with regard to faith, and conduct. It aggravates passions and emotions, and upsets life.

(4) *Antarāya* :

It obstructs the natural, inborn, and infinite power and energy of the soul, and prevents and handicaps the good actions which the individual intends to do.

These four types of actions are called obscuring (*ghātin*) *karmans*. The following four types of *karmans* which deal with the status of one's individual being are non-obscuring (*aghātin*) *karmans*. They are as follows :—

(5) *Āyuṣka* :

It determines the span of life — long or short — by disturbing the immortal continuity of existence.

Longevity is determined by this *karman*.

(6) *Nāma* :

It makes body, causes various conditions and circumstances, and becomes responsible for making an individual being. The embodied condition of the soul is the cause of this type of *karman*.

(7) *Gotra* :

It determines nationality, caste, racial, and social standing of an individual.

(8) *Vedanīya* :

It obscures the natural blissful nature of the soul and produces earthly pleasure and pain.

Our *karmans* of mind, speech, and body give rise to subtle *karman*-matter called *bhāva-karman*, which again in the form of *dravya-karman* sticks to the soul on being contacted with passions (*kaṣāya*) which are of a viscous nature. This matter, having a sticking nature, causes bondage and sorrow. The soul is thus associated with *karmans* due to its passions (*kaṣāya*) and vibrations (*yoga*) or activity of the body; the former, *i.e.*, the passions (*kaṣāya*), may be controlled, but the

'non-affecting' (*īryāpatha*) influx of the activities of body, sense-organs, and speech still continue until the soul is freed from the captivity of all the energy-obstructing *karmans*. Though such a soul is free and has not absolutely stopped all activities, it is perfect, and is engaged in redeeming suffering humanity and in world-ministration.

The Jaina Theory of 'Colouration' (Leśyās) of the Souls :

Connected with the Jaina theory of *karman*, is its theory of *Leśyās* or 'Colouration.' *Leśyā* is the 'colouration' of the soul due to the effects of *karman*. It is the transformation of the soul caused by the activity of the mind. The colouration or complexion is not visible to the naked eyes, but has only moral bearing. It takes place when the soul is associated and connected with the mind. The effect of *karman* colours the soul. Due to the infinite activities of the mind, the colourations or transformations of the soul are also infinite. But for the sake of convenience they are classified under six heads, viz. : (1) *kṛṣṇa-leśyā*, (2) *nīla-leśyā*, (3) *kapota-leśyā*, (4) *tejo-leśyā*, (5) *padma-leśyā*, and (6) *śukla-leśyā*. They are explained as follows :

(1) *Kṛṣṇa-leśyā* :

It is of dark colour and has the nature of evil tendencies (*rākṣasīvṛtti*) and *āsuric* in character.

(2) *Nīla-leśyā* :

It is of blue colour and has the nature of anger, malice, etc.

(3) *Kapota-leśyā* :

It is of the colour of a pigeon. It is characterised by deception, fraudulence, etc.

4) *Tejo-leśyā* :

It is of reddish colour, is less harmful, and is characterised by proper moral discipline.

(5) *Padma-leśyā* :

It is of yellow (*haridrā*) colour; it represents the control of senses and desires.

(6) *Śukla-leśyā* :

It is of bright white colour, represents a state of meditation, and denotes high spiritual progress. It accrues to a person till the advent of liberation (*mokṣa*).

These different 'colours' are nothing but the different states of the soul in its different mental conditions. The energy of the soul is of two kinds. (1) *saleśya, i.e.,* souls associated with colouration; (2) *aleśya, i.e.,* souls not associated with colouration. This causes differences in the souls. The emancipated souls (*mukta*) are those who are free from any colouration (*aleśya*), and bound souls (*baddha*) are those who are associated

with these colourations. In other words souls are divided into three categories, viz. :

(*a*) those souls under the influence of passions (*kaṣāya*);

(*b*) those souls who have conquered all the passions and the obscuring *karmans* (*ghātin karmans*); and

(*c*) those omniscient souls who have completely controlled all the obscuring (*ghātin*) and non-obscuring (*aghātin karmans*).

The Jainas believe that when the forces of *mithyātva, avirati, pramāda, kaṣāya,* and *yoga*—the last of which are only activities, physical, mental, and vocal (*kāyika*, *mānasika*, and *vācika*)—cease, there is no possibility of *karman*. The way to liberation consists of the following :

(1) Right faith (*samyag-darśana*),

(2) Right knowledge (*samyag-jñāna*), and

(3) Right conduct (*samyak-cāritra*).

These three together are called by the Jainas *Triratna* or *Ratnatraya* (Three Jewels).

The Jaina Conception of Triratna or Ratnatraya :

The Jaina conception of the *Triratna* consists of the following :

(I) Right faith (*samyag-darśana*) in the teachings of the Jinas :

This is the basis of right conduct for spiritual progress. In order to have a thorough and

unwavering faith, a seeker following this path should be free from three types of superstition and ignorance, viz.,

(*a*) *loka-muḍha*, (*b*) *deva-muḍha*, and (*c*) *pāṣaṇḍī-muḍha*. They are described as follows :

(*a*) *Loka-muḍha* :

Loka-muḍha is a term applied to those who believe in acquiring merit through taking holy dips in rivers, walking on fire, or circumambulating the hills.

(*b*) *Deva-muḍha* :

The term *deva-muḍha* is applied to those who hold an anthropomorphic view of God, endowing Him with human qualities. Such people worship God with a view to obtaining His favour.

(*c*) *Pāṣaṇḍī-muḍha* :

Pāṣaṇḍi-muḍha denotes devotion to pseudo-saints and their teachings for scriptural authority.

The seeker is also to be free from eight kinds of conceit, viz.,

(*i*) intellectual snobbery,

(*ii*) conceit due to one's ability in performing splendid worship in temples,

(*iii*) conceit of one's noble birth,

(*iv*) conceit due to one's high station (caste),

(*v*) conceit due to one's physical or mental prowess,

(*vi*) conceit due to one's supernatural powers,

(*vii*) conceit due to one's penances or *yogic* attainments,

(*viii*) conceit due to one's physical beauty.

(II) Right Knowledge (*samyag-jñāna*) :

It consists in knowledge of the true nature of Reality, without any doubt or error.

(III) Right Conduct (*samyak-cāritra*) :

It consists in an attitude of neutrality, without affection or hatred (*rāga-dveṣa*), towards the objects of the external world. It consists in the cultivation of the five vows, viz. :

(*a*) *ahiṁsā*, *i.e.*, non-violence or non-injury. It is not simply abstaining from injury but implies a positive state of love and kindness,

(*b*) *sunṛta*, *i.e.*, truth-speaking. It is not only speaking what is true, but also what is good and pleasant,

(*c*) *asteya, i.e.*, not taking anything which has not been given,

(*d*) *brahmacarya*, *i.e.*, observing celibacy in word, thought, and deed. It is abandoning lust for all kinds of objects in mind, speech, and body, and

(*e*) *aparigraha, i.e.*, renunciation of attachments for worldly things. These five cardinal virtues, called *pañca mahāvratas*, are to be cultivated by an aspirant. The threefold path of *samyag-darśana, samyag-jñāna,* and *samyak-cāritra* — the path shown by the Tīrthaṁkaras — is required to be followed by an aspirant simultaneously.

Meditation and the Five Parameṣṭhis :

The above-mentioned virtues, as inalienable properties, exist in the soul, but they have to be cultivated. For spiritual progress, meditation (*dhyāna*) implying freedom from the action of affection and hatred (*rāga-dveṣa*) and delusion (*moha*), along with repetition (*japa*) of *mantras* taught by the Master, are highly useful. It is to be remembered that mere concentration, following from a special effort on the part of the aspirant, is not meditation in the truest sense of the word; for real meditation is a natural process and requires no conscious effort of any kind. In the earlier stages of meditation, the aspirant is required to fix his attention on something other than the ego, viz., the forms of the five *Great Ones* called *Parameṣṭhis*. The *Parameṣṭhis* as objects of meditation are as follows :

(1) *Arhat* :

An *arhat* has an auspicious body (*śubha deha*), free from the four obstructive *karmans* (*ghātin karmans*) viz.,

(*a*) knowledge-covering (*jñānāvaraṇīya*),

(*b*) the intuition-covering (*darśanāvaraṇīya*),

(*c*) the deluding (*mohanīya*), and

(*d*) obstructive (*antarāya*), and

is endowed with the qualities of *ananta-darśana, ananta-sukha, ananta-jñāna*, and *ananta-vīrya*, etc. Essentially he has no body, but apparently he has a glorious body which is physical (*audārika*) and yet free from the seven constitutent elements (*dhātus*) of physical organism.

(2) *Siddha* :

A *siddha* has no body produced by eightfold *karmans,* but has a vision and knowledge of the entire Space (*ākāśa*) called *lokākāśa* and *alokākāśa*, and has a shape like that of a human being on the summit of *lokākāśa*. This body is not still the final body.

(3) *Ācārya* :

An *ācārya* through his own conduct (*ācāra*) practises faith (*darśana*), knowledge (*jñāna*), conduct (*cāritra*), penance (*tapas*), and strength (*vīrya*).

(4) *Upādhyāya* :

An *upādhyāya* has Three Jewels (*triratna*), and is always engaged in giving instructions to others on the path of liberation.

(5) *Sādhu* :

> A *sādhu* practises rules of conduct (*cāritra*) with faith and knowledge leading to liberation (*mokṣa*).

Subsequently, when some progress has already been attained in the path, the ego itself has to be made an object of meditation. In this stage all external possessions and internal hindrances (*saṁyojanas*) which disturb the mind disappear. In the highest meditation there is no activity of body, mind, or speech. The practice of *tapas, śruta*, and *vrata* facilitates meditation to a great extent.

The Fourteen Spiritual Stages (Guṇasthāna) according to Jainism :

In the spiritual fold of the Jainas, we find that the aspirants' path of progress, based upon the degree of gradual perfection, is marked by multiplicity of stages, before his spiritual journey culminates in the realisation of the *summum bonum* of spiritual life. According to the Jaina doctrine, the path consists of fourteen stages, called *Guṇasthāna*, and they are described as follows :

(1) *Mithyādṛṣṭi* :

> The first and the lowest stage where the spiritual journey begins is called *mithyādṛṣṭi guṇasthāna*, which means an erroneous and perverse

attitude towards the Truth. This stage is marked by spiritual myopia of the soul. All the four forces of *karman* are present in this stage. There is just a glimmer of spiritual light in the soul.

(2) *Sāsvādana-samyagdṛṣṭi* :

The next comes the stage known as *sāsvādana-samyagdṛṣṭi*. This stage in fact does not denote the second stage of progress, but indicates a stage to which the soul is liable to fall from a higher stage if passions arise in the *sādhaka* after enlightenment.

(3) *Samyak-mithyādṛṣṭi* :

The third stage is called *samyak-mithyādṛṣṭi*. It is an attitude of ambivalence, right-cum-wrong disposition. This stage is that to which the soul of a *sādhaka* may fall after initial enlightenment, as a consequence of the rise of *karmans* that are capable of causing spiritual blindness. After this fall, the soul may either rise up or go down to the starting point.

(4) *Avirata-samyagdṛṣṭi* :

The fourth stage on the path to enlightenment is called right - vision - without - refrain, *avirata-samyagdṛṣṭi*. Even after acquiring right vision, the soul is not spiritually strong enough to desist from wrong deeds. It lacks control over itself.

(5) *Deśavirata-samyagdṛṣṭi* :

The fifth stage is called the stage of *deśavirata-samyagdṛṣṭi*, *i.e.*, right vision with partial restraint. Here also the soul has no complete control over itself and cannot desist from treading the path of sinful activities. The soul, at this stage, lacks in spiritual strength for further ascent. This stage is marked by a predominance of spiritual indolence (*pramāda*).

(6) *Pramatta-saṁyata* :

This is the sixth stage in which spiritual indolence (*pramāda*) persists; and hence it is designated by this term, viz., *pramatta-saṁyata*. But this state of spiritual inertia is overcome in the next stage.

(7) *Apramatta-saṁyata* :

The stage of *apramatta-saṁyata* follows the previous stage of spiritual inertia, and the aspirant fully attains self-control and overcomes spiritual indolence.

(8) *Apūrvakaraṇa or nivṛtti* :

Next comes the eighth stage, called *apūrva-karaṇa* or *nivṛtti*. This stage indicates a stage of purification; at the same time it is capable of reducing the period and magnitude of previous *karmans*. The act of purgation in this stage is intense, such as never happened before

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in the history of soul's journey to its original home.

(9) *Anivṛtti-bādara-samparāya* :

The ninth stage is called *anivṛtti-bādara-samparāya* in which the soul undergoes a process technically called *anivṛtti-karaṇa*.

(10) *Sūkṣma-samparāya* :

The tenth stage is that of *sūkṣma samparāya*, which makes the soul free from the hold of all passions. However, a modicum of avarice persists even at this stage.

(11) *Upaśānta-kaṣāya* :

The eleventh stage is that of *upaśānta-kaṣāya* — a stage where all types of passions, gross or subtle, are put down, rendering the soul fit for higher flights. Nevertheless, a thin coating of *karman* shrouds the soul. The soul is known as *vītarāga*, as it has freed itself from all attachments. From this stage the soul may fall back to lower stages if suppressed passions reappear. Otherwise, it may continue its upward journey.

(12) *Kṣīṇa-kaṣāya* :

The twelfth stage marks the extirpation of passions, *kṣīṇa-kaṣāya*, where the soul halts only for a short while. This is the stage where

the soul conquers all the four types of *ghātin karmans* and all passions, *i.e.*, all hindering *karmans* are completely wiped out.

(13) *Sayoga-kevali-guṇasthāna* :

The thirteenth stage is called *sayoga-kevali-guṇasthāna*, which may be equated with the stage of *jīvanmukti* of other Indian systems. It is a stage in which all the knots of the soul, which keep it away from realising its true nature, are loosened, except one knot — and that is of activity (*yoga*). The *yogin* becomes *kevalin* or all-knowing. The spiritual energy expresses itself freely. The soul continues to remain encased in the body till the latter's dissolution.

(14) *Ayoga-kevalin* :

The fourteenth stage is that of *ayoga-kevalin*, representing absolute rest, and marked by absolute cessation of all activities (*karmans*). Before realising this stage, the soul goes through four intermediate stages between the thirteenth and the fourteenth stage. On reaching the fourteenth stage the soul attains final emancipation (*mukti*).

The State of Liberation and Beyond :

It follows from the foregoing analysis of the *Guṇasthānas* that the four *ghātin karmans* disappear

entirely from the thirteenth stage. The *aghātin karmans* do continue even then, but their presence does not in any way interfere with the enjoyment of the bliss of freedom which the condition of *jīvanmukti* ensures. The *aghātin karmans* correspond to the *prārabdha karmans* of other schools. It is in the thirteenth stage that the seeker becomes a *Tīrthaṁkara*, capable of enlightening the world below with the ineffable mysteries of transcendent wisdom. And it is in this state of resplendent glory that the white meditation (*śukla-dhyāna*) begins to function. Perfection in this meditation (*dhyāna*) causes the body to disappear. The disappearance of body marks the end of *aghātin karmans*, and the advent of the final or supreme spiritual state called *mokṣa* or *siddhi* mentioned earlier. The soul which has realised absolute freedom and purity becomes *siddha*, and lives an external life of spiritual freedom above the universe (*lokākāśa*). These souls abide in a region of blessedness on the level called *śiddha-śilā* beyond the activities of *karman* and matter.

The final beatitude is not to be confounded with the absorption of the soul in *Brahman* or a state of *nirvāṇa*, for every soul even when perfect keeps intact its spiritual individuality, and possesses eight auspicious qualities which are essential to it. An analysis of these qualities shows that the liberated soul has a true and perfect attitude (*samyag-darśana*), knowledge (*samyag-jñāna*), and conduct (*samyak-cāritra*), and has no fatigue. It is supersensuous, interpenetrable, and fixed, and has undisturbed bliss. It has a body which is slightly less than the final body. It is not the ordinary body, owned by the liberated one during his mundane life

in consequence of previous *karmans*, but a glorified body full of life and joy (*śubha-deha*).

The Jaina Concept of Paramātman :

The Jainas have their own concept of *Paramātman*. According to them the self has three states. There is a basic difference between the external self (*bahir-ātman*) and the internal self (*antarātman*), in the sense that the former under delusion identifies itself with the body and the senses, and is attached to the sensual pleasures. The internal self (*antarātman*), on the other hand, has a clear sense of distinction from the body and the sense-organs, is disgusted with such pleasures, and is not identified with the body. The Transcendent Self or the *Paramātman* has perfect freedom, is free from all limitations, and is the purest condition of the Self—which knows everything including *loka* and *aloka* through the all-embracing pure knowledge (*kevala-jñāna*). The realisation of the Transcendental Self (*Paramātman*) takes place only after the gradual realisation of the external self (*bahirātman*) and the internal self (*antarātman*). The journey of the soul in its progressive spiritual advancement may be demarcated in three main stages of the *Guṇasthānas* as follows :

(*a*) the attainment of the external self (*bahirātman*) takes place before the first dawn of vision, on the eve of its cutting the knot (*granthimocana*);

(*b*) when the soul is engrossed in this vision and is on the way to the attainment of omniscience,

it is said to have realised the internal self (*antarātman*);

(*c*) finally, when the soul attains the stage of omniscience, it has the realisation of the Transcendental Self (*Paramātman*). The soul attains this state only when it has eliminated both the souls, external and internal, and this it achieves only by what is called *yoga* (*sādhanā*). *Viṣṇu*, *Para Brahman*, *Īśvara*, *Sugata*, and *Śiva* are different names of one and the same *Paramātman*.[1]

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1. *evaṁ tyaktvā bahirvācaṁ tyajet antar aśeṣataḥ .*
eṣa yogaḥ samāsena pradīpaḥ paramātmanaḥ ..
Samādhi Tantra, 17.

CHAPTER XI

THE SPIRITUAL STAGES OF *SURAT-ŚABDA-YOGA*

1

Surat-Śabda-yoga according to the Rādhāsvāmī faith — *Śabda* as *Vāk* — Three great regions : (*a*) The region of Pure Spirit (*Sad-deśa* or *Dayāla-deśa* or *Rādhāsvāmī-dhāma*), (*b*) The region of Spirit-Matter (*Brahmāṇḍa*), (*c*) The region of Matter-Spirit (*Piṇḍa*) — Stations in spiritual journey : (1) *Sahasradala,* (2) *Baṅkanāla,* (3) *Trikūṭī,* (4) *Mānsarovara,* (5) *Śūnya,* (6) *Mahāśūnya,* (7) *Bhramara-guhā*, and (8) *Satya-loka.*

2

The Supreme Being (*Rādhāsvāmī*) — Sound; the first manifestation; the genesis of the *Anāmī-Puruṣa* — *Rādhāsvāmī*, the manifested Name of the Supreme Being — Spirit-current and Sound-current (*Surat* and *Śabda*) — The manifestation of *Agama-loka* — The manifestation of *Alakha-loka* — *Rādhāsvāmī-Pāda*, the Abode of the *Sants.*

3

The gradation of spiritual Teachers : (1) *Guru,* (2) *Sadguru,* (3) *Sant-Sadguru,* and (4) *Parama-Sant-Sadguru.*

1

Surat-Śabda-yoga :

Among the mystics of modern India, whose lives we have surveyed in the subsequent pages, we have included Svāmijī Mahārāj, the great founder of the

Rādhāsvāmī brotherhood and the first comprehensive expositor of the *Surat-Śabda-yoga*, which has been translated as the spiritual path of the 'Audible Life Stream'. As a path of mystic realisation — an intuitional approach towards the establishment of contact with the Supreme Reality — the *Surat-Śabda-yoga* is based upon elements drawn from the esoteric paths prescribed by the saints of Medieval India. There is a strong influence of *Ṣūfī* mysticism and of the teachings of the galaxy of *Sants* of our land, especially Kabir, on *Surat-Śabda-yoga*. Similarly, there is in it a constant awareness of the spiritual paths prescribed by the still older ancient Indian scholars, saints, and scriptures. Yet the influences are so assimilated in it and so expressed through the experiences of a unique type of Self-realisation, that in its totality it takes on a distinct shape of its own. Its originality and uniqueness are indisputable, and its consistency, along with its inherent fervour of conviction, quite justifiably deserves for it a careful and at the same time reverential consideration.

The ontological speculations in *Surat-Śabda-yoga*, and also its eschatology, are spread over the infinite realms of matter, life, spirit, essence, and Supreme Reality. Very often the epistemology is subtle—almost ingenious. The vision of the spiritual euphoria is, likewise, arrived at through the untying of the knots of the gross material thing, expressed in language which makes it rather difficult for a layman to understand. In the following paragraphs, therefore, we propose to give a brief but lucid resume' of this original metaphysical approach, to serve as an aid to the under-

standing of the particular mystic path which *Surat-Śabda-yoga* champions.

There are different kinds of *yoga,* including *prāṇa-yoga*[1] and the rest, as already mentioned in a previous chapter. But some of the great mystics belonging to the *Rādhāsvāmī* sect hold that, on account of various reasons that are explained in their works, the method described by them as *Surat-Śabda-yoga*[2] is the easiest

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1. *Prāṇa-yoga* is evidently a spiritual discipline of the *prāṇāyāma* type. Its aims are steady concentration and mental purification. The *Rādhāsvāmī* book *Sar Bachan* (Prose) defines it as "The practice of suspending breath and drawing it up to the sixth or seventh nervous centre or ganglion (the seat of which is in the interior, behind the point midway between the two eyes) as a means for obtaining salvation". Evidently it is a very difficult and risky practice. But it should not be confused with another difficult practice, viz., the *haṭha-yoga.*

2. This word etymologically means the 'union of Spirit and Holy Word'. It reminds one of the following lines of the *Śvetaśvatara Upaniṣad* (I. 14). It says :

> *svadehamaraṇiṁ kṛtvā praṇavaṁ co'ttarāraṇim .*
> *dhyāna-nirmanthanābhyāsāt devaṁ paśyen nigūḍhvat ..*

> Making the body the lower friction-stick, and the *praṇava,* the symbolic *oṁ*, the upper stick, and by churning these sticks, one should see God, hidden as it were.

Here the union, through meditation, of the spiritual substance in us (*svadeha*) and the Divine Sound Stream (*praṇava*), like the Spirit and the Holy Word, is described as the prelude to God's vision. As regards *Śabda-yoga*, we know that it enjoys great antiquity and was later revived by Kabir and the other saints. In fact, it is actually an old method, known to the masters of the spiritual path from time immemorial. Bhartṛhari,

and best of its kind. It is a devotional method of a peculiar nature, free from all dangers, and capable of helping the *yogin* withdraw the spirit from its seat in the waking condition, and freeing it for a while from the bondage of the body, the mind, and the senses. This condition resembles death, inasmuch as the withdrawal of the spirit from all forms of *prakṛti* means a complete, even though temporary, suspension of the latter. The freed spirit then rises aloft to catch hold of the Eternal Sound, *i.e.*, the *nāda* or life-current, and in this process is carried back to the Divine Source. The spirit, thus released from the body, experiences and realises a slackening of the connection with the external world; and with the newly-got freedom from pleasure and pain (which must vanish as a consequence of the snapping of all material ties) it retires, although temporarily, to enjoy an indescribable tranquillity and fullness of the bliss of the Kingdom of Heaven manifested within it.

Śabda as Vāk :

The 'Audible Stream of Life', which is the basis of the esoteric path of Rādhāsvāmī, may, as we have already said, appear strange and exotic; but it clearly indicates its origin and development from the classical theological and spiritual systems of the past. As a matter of fact its proponents themselves have never

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the author of *Vākyapadīya*, was acquainted with it very intimately, and much of the Nānakapanthī and Tāntrika literature shows close familiarty with it.

hesitated to accept this indebtedness; and we, on our part, feel that the bedrock, unless clearly seen, will not enable us to understand the superstructure of the ontology of the spiritual and 'Audible Life Stream'. The Biblical affirmation in the Gospel of St. John is well-known :

> "In the beginning there was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made by Him and without Him was not anything made that was made".

The identity between God and Word is thus established. The ancient Greeks gave the term *Logos*, to stand for God's Word, to the eternally flowing Divine Energy, whose immanence none can deny. As sound is vibration, the cosmic energy of God is expressed through the vibrations emanating from Him, in which He is always fully manifested, and which, passing through infinite regions of space, fulfil the dynamic creative urge of which He is the incarnation.

In India the schools of grammarians owing their origin to Pāṇinī, Patañjali, and Bhartṛhari, and also the champions of the various Āgama cults, lay great faith in the latent spiritual fire in sound (*Śabda*). To the grammarians,[3] the Eternal *Verbum* is *Śabda-Brahman* or *Parā-Vāk*, comprehending in it the

3. According to some Saṁskrit grammarians, word is destructible. It has its origin and is then dissolved. Meaning of a word is known not by the word itself, but by *sphoṭa*. *Sphoṭa* is that which illumines the meaning of a letter, word, or a sentence. It is the power of meaning imbedded in a letter or word.

essential nature of the Pure Being. Why are all knowable objects nameable ? This inevitable verbal association of knowledge should go to unmask that secret that all knowledge-knowable equation is based upon an eternal relationship between the Supreme Word, the Highest Universal, and the creation of the objective world of knowledge. So it is that "through this name and this thought the Universal is manifested, *i.e.*, creation in time (=production of individuals) follows. Naming and thinking being virtually an identical process, this manifestation of the Universals is the same as the revelation of Veda, which is nothing

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According to the *sphoṭavādins,* there are two types of words : (1) *Vaikṛta* and (2) *Prākṛta*. Bhartṛhari says :

sphoṭaścagrahaṇe hetuḥ prākṛto dhvanirisyate .
vṛttibhede nimittatvaṁ vaikṛtaṁ pratipadyate ..

Prākṛta sound is eternal, whereas *vaikṛta* sound is transitory. In the *Bhāgavat-purāṇa* (XII. 6) we find that the subtle sound that emanates from the *Parameṣṭhī-Brahman* is the *Śabda-Brahman.* When the activities of the mind cease, the *yogin* listens to the *nāda* of *Śabda-Brahman*. From this subtle sound comes out the sound of *praṇava,* which has three *mātrās* (syllable). This self-luminous sound is *sphoṭa* itself. This *sphoṭa* is indivisible and permanent.

The *sphoṭa* is thus transcendent. It is neither ordinary word nor sound, but is the basis of all letters. It is the inner meaning of the *padas* (*i.e.*, meaningful word). About the name of the Lord it is said : *akṣarāṇāmakārastvaṁ sphoṭastvaṁ varṇasaṁśrayaḥ*. In fact *sphoṭa* is identical with the Supreme Reality, which eludes all attempts at intellectual comprehension. Bhartṛhari has rightly said :

anādi nidhanaṁ brahma śabdastattvaṁ yadakṣaram .
vivartate'rthabhāvena prakriyā jagato yataḥ ..

Vākyapadīya, I.1.

but the body of eternal names and thoughts in eternal relation to the Universals."[4]

Thus it follows from the foregoing analysis that *Śabda* is both the source and pattern of all beings and also the Supreme and the Transcendent. As a matter of fact, in Bhartṛhari this philosophy of sound is developed both in its epistemological and metaphysical extensions, and finally prescribed as the path leading to the realisation of *Brahman.* In the Āgama literature, likewise, the Supreme *Śabda* is given the highest place, though in a manner which is unlike that of the grammarians. In Āgama, the unstruck (*anāhata*) sound is both *Vāk* and *Parā-Vāk.* In the former capacity it is the manifestation of Supreme Power (*Parā-Śakti*). But this Supreme Power comes from *Parama-Śiva*. It is the unlimited and unrestrained expression of the Will of the Absolute, and in the latter capacity it is the Absolute Itself. Sound (*Vāk*) is classified into four regressive categories, viz., *parā*, *paśyantī*, *madhyamā*, and *vaikharī*.

We have already said *Parā-Vāk* is the Absolute, and it is also called *Parama-Śiva*. The basic idea in it, as well as in the views of the grammarians given above, is drawn from the ancient conviction that Wisdom as expressed through the *Vedas* comes from the revelation of the Supreme unto the *ṛṣis.* Hence, to the Āgama sage, the highest goal is the

4. Kavirāj, Gopīnāth : *Aspects of Indian Thought,* Burdwan, 1966, pp. 15-16.

realisation of his unity with the Wisdom expressed through sound or *Vāk*. This sound is unstruck (*anāhata*), since it is the expression of the Absolute. All human sounds are, however, struck (*vaikharī-vāk*)—expressed through the phonemes of language. But it has to be understood that it has in it the Divine Power, coming as the Supreme free gift to mankind. Hence limited by nature though it is, it is the outermost expression of *Vāk*, manifesting itself in the external world. In this context the transmission of *mantras* by the *sadguru* into the disciples' ear is nothing but the transmission of Divine Power, with which the *sadguru* is endowed. The disciple on his part is required to base his ascent on the strength of the *vaikharī-śabda* to the Supreme Elevation of *Vāk* and finally to the *Parā-Vāk*.

All this will serve as a basis of one's understanding of *Surat-Śabda-yoga*, in which the philosophy of the 'Audible Life Stream' has been logically explained in its own way.

Three Great Regions :

The exposition of *Surat-Śabda-yoga* must of necessity take into account the points touched by the sound-stream in its cyclic movement, for on a knowledge of them depends the ascent of the seeker. It thus boils down to a survey of the cosmography envisaged in this approach. A short account of these higher

spheres is given below[5] as indicating the progressive stages of the soul's pilgrimage to its Divine Source. Broadly speaking, there are three Great Regions in existence, as follows :

(*a*) The Region of Pure Spirit (*Sad-deśa* or *Dayāla-deśa*, also called *Rādhāsvāmī-dhāma*) :

It is a Region uncontaminated by matter and inhabited by Pure Spirit. It is denoted by such expressive names as *Sat-loka, Sac-khaṇḍ*, or *Mukām-haq*. It is certainly the highest of the high regions, the land of ineffable peace where innumerable pure souls dwell. A light which we cannot conceive illumines this region. It is limitless in its expanse. It is the source and destination of all. Only the great saints of the world have the privilege of knowing it. Even they can only say that it is limitless and indescribable. The 'Audible Life Stream' has its origin here, and from here it moves out. "It passes out from this region somewhat like the radio emanations going forth from a great

5. This account is based on the original works of Śibdayāl, known as Svāmījī Mahārāj, and Svāmī Brahma Śaṅkara, two of the renowned saints of the *Rādhāsvāmī* brotherhood. The *Ghaṭa Rāmāyaṇa* of Tulsidāsa (of Hāthras), the works of Sundaradāsa, the disciple of Dādu, and the messages (*vāṇīs*) of other *Sants* do confirm this account, though with individual differences here and there. The followers of Kabir also recognise the basic correctness of the approach.

broadcasting station. It is the 'Audible Life Stream', the most important factor in the system of the Masters. This Stream permeates the entire system of universes. A thing of great importance to us is that the music of this ever-flowing current, the stream of life, can be heard by a real Master and also by his students who have advanced even a little on the Path".[6] There are subdivisions of this land in the progressive scale, but everywhere it is the purest and most vital expression of Love. The highest of these subdivisions is the seat of the Supreme Spiritual Lord, and is called *Rādhāsvāmī-Dhāma*.

(*b*) The Region of Spirit-Matter (*Brahmāṇḍa*) :

This is another region, vast and illimitable, inferior only to the former region. It is significantly called *Brahmāṇḍa*, referring at once to its lord who is *Brahmā* and its shape which is like that of an egg. *Brahmā* is the governor, ruling at the sufferance of the Supreme, and for that matter there are countless *Brahmās* ruling over countless regions of this type, called by the name of the spiritual-material region. It is a region in which matter is pure and subject to spirit. It is free from worldly desires and passions. Life is very pure and

6. Johnson, J. : *The Path of the Masters*, California, 1958, p. 195.

spirits are clothed in forms of pure matter. The sound-stream likewise manifests itself in its purest form in this region and those who live in it pulsate in its rhythm. Lowest down, there is the nethermost *Brahmāṇḍa*, known also as *Trikūṭī,* where the Universal Mind dwells, and from where all individual minds are derived. The incidence of spirit goes on decreasing with these regions on the downward scale, finally coming down to the lowest of heavens called *Aṇḍa,* with its centre in a thousand-petalled lotus called *Sahasradala-kamala.* Actually it is a great confluence of light, which serves almost as the portal to the heavens above. From the physical universe this is the nearest heaven, but from the highest supraphysical zone it is the most distant.

(*c*) The Region of Matter-Spirit (*Piṇḍa*) :

It is a region in which matter predominates and spirits are clothed in coarse matter. Carnal desires and passions reign supreme, on account of the spirits having forgotten their divine source.

In this region, we climb down to gross physical matter. Yet the predominance of the gross material things does not preclude the admixture of a little amount of mind and a lesser amount of spirit. In its totality this region is called

Piṇḍa, of which the human world and its surroundings form only a very small part. Life here is, of course, of a much lower grade than life in the higher cosmic regions. Imperfections are the rule in this region, and from them grow evil and suffering. Whatever appears positive in this region is really negative in character, owing to the depletion of the spirit. Spiritual anemia, however, can be cured by a deliberate forging ahead by the latent spirit, and its gradual ascent towards the higher spheres. The more it rises, the more is the perfection which the spirit attains. This ascent is nothing else but the great adventure of coming into contact with the 'Audible Life Stream'.

The above three great divisions, as just pointed out, exist in the macrocosm or universe as well as in the microcosm or human body. This means that the seeds of spiritualisation and divinity are latent in every individual. Fruition of the spiritual life of man depends on the way in which the seeds are sown in the proper soil, fertilized and watered. The way is difficult and the *Surat-Śabda-yoga* sets out to chart this path for the spiritual wayfarer. Suffice it to say that the correspondence between the macrocosm and the microcosm is the guarantee that the communion of the creatures inhabiting the region of gross matter (*piṇḍa*) with the higher region of *Brahmāṇḍa,* and the still higher region of pure spirit (*Sad-deśa*), is within the pale of possibility.

Stations in Spiritual Journey :

The higher stations according to *Surat-Śabda-yoga* may be summed up as follows :

(1) *Sahasradala* (The region of thousand-petalled lotus) :

The Spirit when withdrawn from the pupil of the eye, where it is said to be seated during the waking hours, rises up on the sound-current towards the *sahasrāra,* passing through the intermediate regions of the three deities (*devas*) associated with the creation, etc., of the world. *Puruṣa* and *Prakṛti* appear in this region as *Brahman* or *Nirañjana* or *Nārāyaṇa,* and *Māyā* or *Jyoti,* respectively. It is a region of wonderful effulgence and celestial radiation. This universal radiation is known as *cidākāśa* and manifests itself from the *sahasrāra.* Further, it is described that the *yogins* in their ascent begin their concentration at the third eye, ascending progressively from that point first to the *aṣṭadala-kamala* and next to the *sahasradala-kamala,* said to be the first of the great regions which the *yogins* touch in their spiritual ascent. Onwards, the great spiritual regions begin. The warning is also given that even a great *yogin* is liable to exhaust all his strength and resources after reaching the last point mentioned above, and hence for him there is no possibility of any further progress beyond this point. It is only the greatest of the great who are able to forge ahead towards the still upper regions.

(2) *Baṅkanāla* (The region of the labyrinthine strait or channel):

It is a crooked path, with steep ascents and descents, from the Three Eminences (*Trikūṭī*) in *Brahmāṇḍa* to the centre of the thousand-petalled lotus (*sahasradala-kamala*). Following the path pursued by the soul in its upward ascent, the trajectory will have to be reversed, showing how the upward-forging soul has to ascend through a minute hollow in the Pure Consciousness, pictured as the clear sky (*cidākāśa*), into the crooked strait or tunnel and go uphill till it emerges upon the prospect of another most resplendent firmament of wide expanse, where a triangular mansion reveals itself.

Bearing in mind that the grand macrocosm is fully reflected in the human microcosm, and also considering the part played by this channel at the time of the creation of the universe of the matter-spirit order, we find that the currents of *Brahman, Māyā,* and of the three *guṇas,* viz., *sattva, rajas,* and *tamas* flow down to the lower planes through the region of *Baṅkanāla*. Taking the channel again as the upward point going towards the lower planes, we find that the three streams which issue from here in three separate channels flowing lower down into the human system are known as the three intraorganic nerves (*nāḍīs*), viz., *īḍā, piṅgalā,* and *suṣumnā*. These are very subtle currents; the last-named occupies the middle position, while the first is on the left and the second is on the right sides. All spiritual energy flows through these

channels, or in the human body, to the lower portion of *Brahmāṇḍa*. In the spiritual elevation when the trajectory is upward, it is through these *nāḍīs* that the spiritual energy latent in man rises up towards the higher spiritual regions.

(3) *Trikūṭī* (The region of Three Eminences):

The triangular mansion mentioned above is called *Trikūṭī*. It is an important station, where according to the *Sants,* the *yogin* attains the realisation of *Brahman*. It is here, during the cosmic creation of the nether worlds, that the three *guṇas*, viz., *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas* are said to make their first appearance, so do in their subtlest (*sūkṣma*) forms the five elements of which the body is composed. The purified, yearning spirit which succeeds in reaching this region attains the rank of a 'master of *yoga*' (*yogeśvara*).

The genesis of *Trikūṭī* (which literally means 'the region of Three Eminences') is ascribed to the outflow of two currents, *kāla-puruṣa* and *ādyā-puruṣa* from the uppermost region known as *Satya-loka*. The conjoint activity of these two currents results in the creation of the region of a comparatively diminished spirituality known as *Brahmāṇḍa*. There is a further conjunction of the *Akṣara-Puruṣa*, the immutable being, with *kāla* and *ādyā*. This conjoint activity, enjoying great cosmic energy, creates the whole of *Brahmāṇḍa*. To facilitate clearer understanding, the nomenclature can be altered into the conjoint activity of *puruṣa, prakṛti,* and *akṣara-puruṣa*.

The three currents converge at *Trikūṭī*, which comprises the three peaks, called *meru*, *sumeru*, and *kailāsa*. It is at this point too that out of the original currents, *Brahman* and *Māyā* manifest themselves. As a matter of fact, this is the point where the five elements which go to make up matter are also born.

(4) *Mānasarovara* (The Pool of the Mind):

So far as the great powers are concerned the spirit in *Trikūṭī* may be a past master in *yoga* (*yogeśvara*), but it is not yet altogether free from the stain of matter. It has, therefore, to soar upwards and take a plunge into this pool of nectar (*amṛta-kuṇḍa*) in order to be absolutely pure and free from all traces of matter. The nectar (*amṛta*) of *Mānasarovara* is in perpetual inflow from the higher spiritual regions of Truth and Purity into the Void (*śūnya*) on the top of *Brahmāṇḍa*.

The location of this great reservoir of absolute purity is pointed out to be just below the august seat of *Akṣara-Puruṣa*. In his spiritual ascent, the great adept, who is able to reach this point, is supposed to have gathered subtle impurities in the course of his upward journey through the region of the Universal Mind (*Brahmāṇḍī-manaḥ* or *kāla-puruṣa*). The impurities are washed off when the adept has a dip in *mānasarovara*. The plain meaning, in terms of any spiritual elevation, is that, at a particular stage of this journey, the mind has to be cleansed and rendered free from all material involvements. The

pure mind will then rise up to the region of Pure Spirit. Later, with the dissolution of the mind, will come its full absorption in the spirit. The *Mānasarovara* thus stands for the cathartic process, through which the mind has to pass in order to get rid of its impurities caused by the infection of matter.

5) *Śūnya* (The region of Void):

This is the region where *Akṣara-Puruṣa* or *Para Brahman* is realised. In the human body the place is known by the name of *brahmarandhra,* or the tenth aperture (*daśama-dvāra*), located in the cranial region. In the second order of the cosmic regions, *Brahmāṇḍa* is the region of Spirit just in the process of mingling with Mind. The topmost portion of this region, as also the highest in regard to the spiritual content, is the *Śūnya*. Beyond this is the region of the Pure Spirit.

(6) *Mahāśūnya* (The Great Void):

This is a vast area of void beyond the utmost bounds of the inhabited cosmic systems or of the regions of Universal Mind (*brahmāṇḍī-manaḥ*), but outside the purely Spiritual Regions of the Divine. It is a sort of barrier between the two kingdoms. This means that it is, as an extension of the infinite region of the Supreme Being Himself, a comparatively vague and weak reflection of the higher spiritual regions. It is a Void and a barrier, no doubt; but due to the constant impress of the

creational process falling upon it, it has passed through an evolutionary process, in the course of which the subtle subdivisions of the purely spiritual regions have manifested themselves in the midst of this void. In these subdivisions live the great saints. Explained in terms of human ascent to the spiritual heights, this region must, therefore, be deemed as the highest spiritual state which a man, freed completely from the domination of matter and mind, can enjoy in a supramundane state of ineffable bliss.

(7) *Bhramara-guhā* (The Rotating Cave):

It is the gateway to the *Satya-loka*, the Region of Absolute Truth, and is presided over by *So'haṁ-Puruṣa*.

'Strait is the gate', says The Bible, and so is this gateway too; one who can successfully negotiate it enters into the highest of the high regions, where everything is pure bliss. It is evidently a point beyond the material planes, and an entrance into it must, therefore, be preceded by the dissolution of the material body. It is interesting to record in this connection that the idea of *Bhramara-guhā* is developed in the *cakra*-system popularised by the followers of Gorakṣanātha, from which, evidently, it has been drawn by the exponents of the Rādhāsvāmī faith. According to the above source, the *Bhramara-guhā* is one of the six *cakras,* and is the place where *samādhi-yoga* begins with a complete cessation of the activities of

life and mind (*prāṇa* and *manas*). This *cakra* is further described as a splendid lotus with ten million petals.

(8) *Satya-loka* (The Region of the Absolute Truth):

This is one of the highest of all the regions. It is here that the Self, completely purged of its material and mundane impurities, is favoured with the vision of the Truth—first concretely in the divine presence of the Supreme Truth (*Satya-Puruṣa*), and finally in a formless and abstract manner.

About the genesis of this divine region, it is said, it comes next only to *Anāmī*, and as its name signifies, is nameless. This region is the first manifestation in a conscious form of the flow of the spiritual sound-wave from the higher region. The great potency of the region is seen in its ability to draw all lower creations towards the precreational state, *i.e.*, get everything reabsorbed in pure spirit, though this may happen only after billions of years. Further, to see how elevated this region is, it is said that in *Satya-loka,* "spirit was so nearly of the highest tension that it only needed to be awakened and touched by the Supreme Spirit to gain stable equilibrium and unchanging condition of all eternity. .... All through it, but not beyond its limits, always plays the double united current of *Surat* and *Shabd*".[7] The dwellers

7. From *Notes of Discourses by Babuji Maharaj,* Agra, 1947, p. 26.

in this region are spirits enjoying happiness of the highest form, and complete freedom from all types of work. Those who, due to their spiritual ascent, are able to rise up to this region, continue to remember their past existence, but they are completely free from all the exigencies of the nether world.

The ontological speculations in the *Surat-Śabda-yoga*, likewise, can be understood by the explanation and understanding of certain fundamental concepts. Below, we shall make an attempt to do so.

2

The Supreme Being (*Rādhāsvāmī*):

The Supreme Being is an illimitable ocean of Pure Spirit. He is perfect and is always in an ecstatic state of love and bliss. In the precreational stage He alone was conscious, the Lord, absorbed in His ineffable Bliss. He was also Love, of which He was the enjoyer as well as the enjoyed, for nothing else existed. But it was Love in its most dynamic form and spirit. The great potency and vitality of love, rather its essential nature, can never be gainsaid. Everything which exists, coming as it does from the Supreme Being, can never be without love. So, if anything were existent without love it would be not merely a contradiction in terms, but the Lord could never be conscious of it. Vague though it will be, we can form an idea of what the Supreme Being is from love, which is His main attribute. All love,

we know, in its highest and best sense, is the producer of the greatest imaginable happiness. Similarly, the perfection of love in the Supreme Being was the source of the highest ecstasy of bliss. This love made Him completely self-absorbed and self-concentrated; love, we know, always leads to identification, concentration, and absorption. Due to this process and its consequent tension, there was a shade of dichotomy in the Supreme Being through the creation of two alternate states, one slightly less spiritual and less spontaneously blissful than the other. Yet concentration by itself was the manifestation of the eternity of the Supreme Being, because concentration is the strongest safeguard against any disintegration and dissolution; and in His case, it was limitless and comprehensive. This limitless concentration of the Supreme Being revealed His other aspects : He was (1) Absolute Bliss, (2) Absolute Knowledge, and (3) Absolute Power.

Therefore it follows that before creation, the Supreme Lord was a highly concentrated but otherwise homogeneous expanse of pure spiritual substance, *i.e.*, separate entities did not exist in Him ; He was above all such entities. But the moot point in all religious systems is whether God is personal or impersonal. The Supreme Being as *Rādhāsvāmī* is both personal and impersonal; He has infinite extension; and though essentially He is formless, He has also a form in *Sad-deśa* or *Satya-loka*. His form, however, came into existence as prior to creation, to understand which we shall have to take up the thread from the point made out earlier, that His love created within Him a zone of relatively weak spirituality, which brought about a lett-

ing out of the concentrated energy of which He was the embodiment.

The Supreme Being divested Himself of the spirituality of which He was the source and reservoir, not because He could not retain it, but because the spirituality of lower intensity in Him, brought into being by His all-consuming, unlimited love, demanded such a letting out. Thus was created the first spiritual being in the cosmic hierarchy. The force so created was the *Agama-Puruṣa*, the first created being, evolved just as a child is brought forth from the mother's womb. That is, the fragmented spirituality, referred to above, was thrown down in 'the fulness of time' as the child after the nine-month period of development in the womb is ejected from it. The psychology at this stage could be stated thus : in consequence of the above divestment and depletion, there lay at the feet of the Supreme Being that other spirituality of still greater depletion which was unable to gravitate back to Him. In His infinite mercy and love, He therefore desired that this also should partake of His Bliss. A resplendent joy, ineffable and infinite, filled Him thus, as He thought it fit to set the ball rolling in this way towards the cosmic creation.

Sound, The First Manifestation ; The Genesis of the Anāmī-Puruṣa :

It is in the above light, that the Logos doctrine, the principle of the 'Audible Life Stream', which is

the basis of the *Rādhāsvāmī* metaphysics, finds its development. In His omniscience the Supreme Lord saw that in order that creation might proceed, it was necessary that everything should revolve round a *centre*, a great power-house of spiritual energy, which would send out a perpetual stream of current to energise everything within its orbit. The instrument for this work was found handy in the mass of depleted spirituality on which had been impinged His exalted nature. This thus became the great instrument of creation. At an opportune moment, the impact of the Supreme Lord upon the mass of depleted spirituality resulted in a great upheaval, from which a great sound burst forth. Wave after wave came out to form an infinite reservoir of sound; in other words, it was the genesis of the first manifested body of the Lord in the unmanifested *Anāmī-Puruṣa,* the Nameless Being. The duality between the manifested and the unmanifested was held in balance in Him. Though partaking of infinity and eternity, it also manifested itself in the beginning of time.

The spiritual sound-wave continued, however, now emanating from the above reservoir too. Sound was the first manifestation from the Nameless Being, His form coming only later. Contrarily however, sound is never a prerequisite of the Supreme Being, though He is its creator. His essential state is that of tranquillity, peace, and calm. But when He desires to have a dialogue with the elevated spirits living at His feet, He does it through sound which embodies in itself all His spiritual energies. As such, the sound is charged with the divine current and invested with

all the divine powers. It is self-contained, complete and unique in everyway. Thus it is the hearing of sound which is the first of the sensory functions. All other senses have only followed suit. The sound (*śabda*) thus is the root of all that is. When we turn to Christian theology, we find that the part played by the Holy Ghost is almost the same as that of this sound-current. The Holy Ghost stands for the spiritual current which serves as a bridge between God the Father and God the Son. The sound is the same bridge between the Supreme Being and the different categories of monads, the *jīvas*.

Rādhāsvāmī, The Manifested Name of the Supreme Being:

As the ovoid form, containing the endless store of spiritual energy as sound, expressed itself through the three attributes of 'including, embracing, and enveloping', so did the sound waves — which issued forth from it. This sound, essentially inexpressible, can still be vocally expresed approximately by the syllable '*Svā*', followed by a sound symbolised by the alphabet '*Mī*', clearly indicating thus that all the spiritual forces are turned towards the centre. To clarify the point, it could be said that when the Supreme Being manifested Himself, He declared by the sound which issued from Him, 'I envelop and attract all', 'All depends on me', 'All is protected by me' ('*Svā*'), 'All is included in me' ('*Mī*'). Thus it was that the divine purpose was made known.

The reservoir of sound was also an ocean of love. As it reverberated, it overflowed. The sound which proceeded from it, therefore, was the commotion resulting from the overflow of the all-embracing Love of the Supreme Being, coming down spontaneously as the shower of benediction upon the created. *Rādhā* is the name by which is designated this overflow of grace and love — an overflow produced by the ecstasy of love, the purity of which is beyond all description. From this the inference is automatic that love is the greatest attribute of the Supreme Being. Hence His region is called *Dayāla-deśa*.

The current which proceeded from the above reservoir, as it overflowed, consisted of the spiritual energy which had been drawn up from below into the Nameless Being, whose genesis has been traced above. The current then slided further down for the purpose of effecting creation. But for the coming down of this store of spirituality in great tidal bores of love-invested sound, the work of creation would never have begun. The assumption in this context is inevitable that as the ovoid was the first manifestation of the 'body' of the Lord, who manifested in His infinite beatitude, so the current was His 'breath'. Only when the current issued (and breathing *pari passu* began) did the work of creation commence.

The effect of concentration acting upon an undifferentiated expanse of substance produces three sections, the three most important cosmographical regions :

(1) that of the positive pole where concentration of spirituality is the greatest ;

(2) that of the negative pole where concentration is the least; and

(3) a region of equilibrium between the two.

Creation continued exactly on this line. The first region, or the positive pole, was the one where the genius of the *Anāmī-Puruṣa* made itself dominant. The middle part of the region of equilibrium lying next to the *Anāmī-Puruṣa* came to be the site of the first creation, where arose the spheres or regions of Pure Spirit. The lower portion, below the region of equilibrium, became the site upon which was reared the *Brahmāṇḍa*, a part of the second or lower creation; while the region marking the greatest spiritual depletion became the location of the *Piṇḍa*, also a part of the lower creation. This world of ours formed one of the sub-regions of the *Piṇḍa*.

We may now retrace the track of the downward-flowing sound-current whose first articulations could be expressed through the twin sounds of '*Svā*' and '*Mī*'. Subsequently this flowing spiritual current also gave rise to another dominant spiritual sound composed of two derivative sounds of '*Rā*' and '*Dhā*', making up '*Rādhā*' — expressing through the first derivative sound, the vibrant note of all-pervasive love, and through the second indicating the inclusion of the awakened spirits within the infinite scope and ambit of this love. However, the last sound, *i.e.*, '*Dhā*' is not so broad as the sound '*Mī*' of '*Svāmī*', which indicates the inclusion of all. The sound of the current thus came to be manifested in '*Rādhā*'.

This sound, united to the original sound of the ovoid ('*Svāmī*'), represented in its fullest amplitude the initial creative act and therefore became the name fully connoting the Creator. As seen from the foregoing states and in chronological order, the name was '*Svāmī Rādhā*'. But for those below, the order was reversed, *i.e.*, for the devotee the name became '*Rādhāsvāmī*', the symbol of the sound-current which alone can take him back to his Creator. The name is charged through and through with spiritual energy. The Creator reveals Himself through it. Whoever listens to it undergoes an inexplicable spiritual elevation. The name electrifies the spirit in the devotee ; it flashes before him the sure prospect of union with his Creator, though the realisation may take aeons to be fulfilled. *Surat*, which stands for the spirit, will therefore have its highest realisation and salvation when united with the sound-current, and hence the phrase *Surat-Śabda-yoga*.

Spirit-Current and Sound-Current (*Surat and Śabda*) :

The deep spiritual mystery in *Rādhāsvāmī* admits of further clarification. The currents operating in it and from it, at the beginning, were not of one kind. Hence it is pointed out that there were in reality two currents, intimately associated with each other—the current of *surat* (spirit), and the current of *śabda* (sound). These two currents operated in perfect harmony, producing thereby great bliss. The former

(*surat*) had the centre-forming capacity, the power of attraction distinguished from the latter (*śabda*). In the current *Rādhā*, already referred to, the phase of *surat* predominated, but gradually there came the predominance of *śabda* at the centre. From the centre the current again issued. This interchangeability could thus be explained as this, that *śabda*; proceeded from *surat* and in turn *surat* proceeded from *śabda*. Hence *śabda* and *surat* are nothing but the outgoing and the incoming breath of the manifested body of the Lord.

Further, it is told that the awakened spirits of the region, created under the impelling attractive influence of the first ovoid, *Rādhāsvāmī-Dhāma* or *Rādhāsvāmī-Pāda*, are called *Paramahaṁsas*, spirits imbued with the original strength and energy of the central current. Besides these awakened spirits there broke forth with the original great current, many similar but smaller currents. These currents are spiritual beings residing in the *Rādhāsvāmī-Dhāma*, and are said to be *Nija-aṁśa*, *i.e.*, belonging to the original essence of the Lord and hence being with the Lord. There are also many progeny of this type on the downward scale.

The Manifestation of Agama-loka :

In course of time, a second reservoir of spirituality came into being. The second ovoid, to form which

the issuing current of *Rādhā* halted in its flow, was the nucleus of the second sphere of creation, called *Agama-loka* (inaccessible world). This became the body (*kāya*) of the *Agama-Puruṣa*. His body came into being with the spirituality about him, which he drew towards himself. He began to breathe, *i.e.*, the spiritual currents began to issue from his body.

The body (*kāya*) of *Agama-Puruṣa* was the first to separate fully from the Supreme Being under the impact of the creational process. From this second great reservoir of spirit, the current of a slightly lower degree of spiritual tension than when it issued from the first ovoid, burst out. Due to its animating vibrations, the spirits round about were awakened, and by the attractive power of *Agama-Puruṣa* were drawn towards the centre.

The creation of *Agama-loka* was then initiated, and it proceeded on the same lines as in the *Rādhā-svāmī-Pāda*. The awakened spirits of this creation go by the name of *Paramahaṁsas*. There are also in this region *Nija-aṁśas* and *Vaṁśas*.

The Manifestation of Alakha-loka :

The current proceeded from *Agama-Puruṣa* downwards as far as it could advantageously go, but the intensity of the spirit progressively declined in this process. In this process it again stopped and formed the third ovoid, which was the nucleus of the *Ala-*

kha-loka (invisible world) — the third creation — and became the body (*kāya*) of *Alakha-Puruṣa*, the genius of that sphere.

The awakened spirits of this sphere are also called *Paramahaṁsas* and there are *Nija-aṁśa* and *Vaṁśa* spirits, as in the higher regions, described above.

Similarly, three more creations followed at successively lower levels, viz., those of *Anāmī* (nameless), whose presiding deity is *Anāmī* (not to be confused with *Anāmi-Puruṣa*, the Supreme Being), *Sat-loka*, whose presiding deity is *Sat-puruṣa*, and *Bhramara-guhā*, whose presiding deity is *So'ham*. The awakened spirits of these lower regions are called *haṁsas*. The other categories of spirits are more or less similar to those in the higher regions.

Rādhāsvāmī-Pāda, *The Abode of the Sants* :

We have already seen that the *Rādhāsvāmī-Pāda* is the highest stage and that *Rādhāsvāmī* is the name of the Supreme Being, the True Lord. Two stages below it is the region of *Sat-nāma*. To the *Sants*, this has been the *Sat-loka, Sac-khaṇḍ, Sāra-śabda, Sat-śabda*, *Sat-nāma*, and *Sat-puruṣa*. From this it will be clear that this is the blessed region where abide all the *Sants* and *Parama-Sants*. For this reason *Sants* rank as the highest among the sentient creatures. Mind and matter do not exist in a region like this. They encompass only the stages and the entire creation below. *Rādhāsvāmī-Pāda* is also known as *Akaha*

(indescribable) and *Anāma* (nameless) because this is the region which is *apara* (fathomless), *Ananta* (unending), and *Anādi* (without beginning). It is the 'One', the archetype, from which all the remaining regions came into being. This stage is spaceless, *lā-makān* in *Ṣūfī* language.

3

The Gradation of Spiritual Teachers — Guru, Sadguru, Sant-Sadguru, and Parama-Sant-Sadguru :

The *Rādhāsvāmī* path envisages the essential connection between the initiating adept (*guru*) and the aspiring *yogin*. Ascent on the scale of the spirit is entirely dependent upon the leaven which the mentor and adept provides to his disciple. Such adepts are further graded according to a progressively rising scale in conformity with their higher and higher spiritual powers. In this connection it is presupposed, however, that there is a category of rare beings, those who are *svataḥ-santa*, *i.e.*, those who are their own illuminators, who do not require guidance from any other source. Those who require such service, and they are in a vast majority, are spiritually rendered so weak, that unless there is a fresh inflow of spirit into their famished inner beings, they can never rise at all. This spiritual tonic is supplied to them by the *gurus* with whom they fortunately become associated. Hence they are called *guru-mukhas*. The *Sadguru* is one who knows the path and has traversed it. Thus he alone is qualified to initiate

the neophyte into this path. The *Sant-Sadguru* goes a step ahead in helping the *jīva* to awaken, realise, conserve, and concentrate his spiritual energies. He even adds to them, charging the *jīva* with fresh powerful energies. It is thus that the *jīva* is led in the spiritual ascent towards the highest spiritual regions. All this, it must be remembered, is a part of the infinite beatitude of the Supreme Being. In this context, Kabir, the great mystic-saint of India, who flourished about seven hundred years ago, is called the first of the *Sant-Sadgurus*. The various categories of such spiritual leaders and mentors are given below :

(1) *Guru* :

A *Guru* is a teacher; and when he is a teacher in matters religious, he is a man well-versed in the rules, principles, and ideas elaborated in the religious system. Naturally, to a lay man he is a source of light, in regard to the understanding of what religion is and what it means. But it does not certainly follow that the man of learning is also a man endowed with spiritual energy, by which he can help uplift the seeker on the spiritual scale.

(2) *Sadguru* :

A *Sadguru* is higher in the scale than the *Guru*. The *Sadguru* is a man with realised spiritual powers and energies. He may have come down, God-impelled, from the second grand division, viz., *Brahmāṇḍa*, to this region of matter-spirit; or he may be in the process of ascent to the

highest division under the guidance of a *Sant-Sadguru.* Either way, contact with him enables a lay man to imbibe a part of the former's spiritual powers and then make a spurt towards the higher goal, after having shaken off his former spiritual lethargy.

(3) *Sant-Sadguru* :

A *Sant-Sadguru* is no human being. He is a divine incarnation. Truth and purity constitute his being; his intimate relation to the Supreme Being is never in doubt. His is an angelic presence; moreover, his free movement across all the higher regions is always unhindered. It is the rarest of privileges to come into contact with such a being, and the fruit of the association too is similarly sweet beyond measure.

(4) *Parama-Sant-Sadguru* :

A *Parama-Sant-Sadguru* is also an incarnation; his too is an angelic presence upon the earth. His superiority to the *Sant-Sadguru* lies in the fact that he has risen to the highest point in the purely spiritual regions beyond *Brahmāṇḍa, i.e.,* he has had access to the *sanctum sanctorum* of the Supreme Creator. Naturally he has gained the knowledge of the prime origin of spirituality. His form itself is divine. The disciple who has had a vision of such a gifted soul can reach his goal by merely contemplating the form of the *Parama-Sant-Sadguru.*

Chapter XII

PROCESS OF ILLUMINATION AND DEGREES OF GRACE AND *DĪKṢĀ*

1

Illumination, graded and sudden (*krama-mukti* and *sadyo-mukti*) — Tāntrika view of two processes : *madhura-pāka* and *haṭha-pāka* — The *word* of the Teacher ; its Efficacy — Vedāntic discipline : *śravaṇa*, *manana*, and *nididhyāsana* — Vācaspati's view — Illumination without *word* — Instantaneous Experience.

2

Grace and its degrees; grace and human effort — Augustinian view — God, the source of grace — Christian, and traditional Hindu view — Origin of grace in Śaiva-Siddhānta — Grace and *Guru* — The Tāntrika view — *Prātibha-jñāna* as an internal aid to *sādhanā* — *Dīkṣā* in *Tāntrika-sādhanā* — *Tāntrika-sādhanā* and its stages.

Illumination, Graded and Sudden :

In the course of our study of spiritual progress, we have seen that the soul passes through a series of intermediate stages of purification until it comes face to face with a vision of the Supreme Reality.

But it is not always necessary for the soul to go through the graded series of purification. In some cases, though admittedly rare, the ultimate vision breaks upon the soul all of a sudden and catches it unawares.

The difference between immediate release (*sadyo-mukti*) and progressive release (*krama-mukti*) is amply illustrated in the history of practical mysticism. It is not true that the highest Truth must come always by degrees or by intermediaries; it may descend by a single flash, when God directly touches the heart of man. St. John of the Cross in his *Ascent of Mount Carmel* held that whatever is created is finite, whether actual or ideal, bearing no proportion to the 'all', and that it is of no help to an aspirant on his way to the 'All'. He observed that the finite things of this world are no link between the 'All' and 'Nothing'. He, therefore, advised the aspirant to reject everything of this world so as to be reduced to 'Nothing', while rapt to the 'All' by a single entrancing touch.[1] His analogy in this regard is famous : whether a bird is tied down by a fibre or by a rope the effect is the same — that it cannot fly away.

St. Teresa could attain spiritual illumination sometimes instantaneously. During such conditions all her normal faculties ceased to function immediately. The fivefold *kośa-viveka* of Vedānta, the seven stages of

1. This finds an echo in Schaffler's beautiful lines in his *Mystic Catholic*. He says :

'How far from here is heaven ? not very far my friend;
A single hearty step will all thy journey end'.

Gnosis (*jñāna-bhūmi*), the six or eight stages (*aṅgas*) of Rāja-yoga, the stages of the evolution of Divine Love (*bhagavad-bhakti*) — all represent the successive denudation of the soul in its passage into the Infinite.

Tāntrika View of Two Processes; Madhura-pāka and Haṭha-pāka:

The Tāntrika literature in a similar strain distinguished between the two processes called *madhura-pāka* and *haṭha-pāka*. The usual process of elimination of irrelevant elements from one's inner being — by a graduated and slow course of regular *sādhanā*, on the basis of the teachings of the master (*guru*) or tradition — is known as *madhura-pāka*. But in exceptional cases there is evidently no gradation (*krama*) at all, and it is called *haṭha-pāka*. A single *word* from the master (*guru*) — for instance, his single glance, or a mere touch of his hand, or even a thought-current from his mind — is enough to release in the disciple a wonderfully potent Spiritual Energy (*śakti*), which sometimes upsets his mechanism and begins to transform his whole existence. What happens under these circumstances is that the Fire of Gnosis (*jñānāgni*) is kindled and all differences are burnt away; the universe as known to the senses is unified into Gnosis itself and transformed into an unending stream of bliss. The universe thus converted into a form of Eternal Joy is then freely enjoyed by the regenerated senses as identical with the Supreme Reality. The result of this is that the insatiable thirst of the senses is forever

quenched, and the senses themselves melt away into the Unity of the Supreme Self.

The 'Word' of the Teacher, Its Efficacy :

We have said that for effecting this sudden illumination and transformation in a deserving aspirant, a single *'word'* from the teacher is enough. Such a *word,* pregnant with power, is a *living word* : a *word* which possesses a unique virtue (*vīrya*) and can work miracles. Words without such inherent potency are, so to say, dead, and are compared in the Tantras to clouds in an autumn sky (*śaradabhra*), incapable of pouring down water. It is said :

ekaḥ śabdaḥ samyag jñātaḥ suprayuktaḥ svarge loke ca kāmadhug bhavati.

That is, a single word is sufficient to yield all the desires of a man, provided it is properly known and rightly used.

Proper cultivation, in the case of such a word, consists in the purification of the aspirant and the consequent manifestation of living energy innate in its being. Such a *word* is indeed a power (*śakti*) — it is a *siddha-vāk*, a perfected word. It is called 'Substantial Word' by St. John of the Cross [2], and *sāra-śabda* by Kabir and other Indian saints.

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2. Such words are described in St. Teresa's works, and the account is summed up by R. A. Vaughan. Vaughan says in his *Hours with the Mystics* :

" These, efficacious words, are said to be spoken divinely in

Vedāntic Discipline : Śravaṇa, Manana, and Nididhyāsana :

Even in Vedāntic[3] culture the influence of '*word*' in the form of *mahāvākya* is recognised. This provides the seed (*bīja*) of Gnosis (*Brahmajñāna*). The disciple is to hear (*śravaṇa*) it directly from the mouth of an illumined teacher (*guru*). If the mind of the disciple is already pure, being free from the elements of doubt (*asṅga-bhāvanā*) or radical misapprehension (*viparīta-bhāvanā*), the flame of spirituality is readily kindled under the 'word' immediately; and without passing

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the centre of the soul, and immediately produce there the actual effect proper to their significance. If something is thus inwardly spoken about humility, for example, the subject of such words is in that moment completely humble" (Vol. II. Book IX. Chapter 2).

In this connection we may cite the opinion of Vyāsadeva, in his commentary on the *sūtra* :

satyapratiṣṭhāyāṁ kriyāphalāśrayatvam

He says : (*Yoga-sūtra*, II. 36).

> *dhārmiko bhūriti bhavati dhārmikaḥ svarga prāpnuhīti svargaṁ prāpnoti amoghāsya vāgbhavati.*

That is, when a *yogin* established in truth says to a man : 'be virtuous', he becomes virtuous; when he says to a man : 'go to heaven', he goes to heaven : his words become true and infallible.

3. The saints distinguish four kinds of words (*vāṇī*), viz., *kalā*, *sandhi*, *jhain*, and *sāra*. Of these, the fourth kind of *śabda* alone has the power of removing error.

It need hardly be pointed out that this quadruple division of words (*vāṇī*) has no analogy to the fourfold classification of *vāk* as *parā*, *paśyantī*, *madhyamā*, and *vaikharī*.

through the intermediate stages of reflection (*manana*) concentration, and meditation (*nididhyāsana*), he attains realisation. In such cases it is assumed that the preparatory discipline of the mind was accomplished in a prior existence. But usually the act of hearing (*śravaṇa*) has to be followed by reflection (*manana*) or rational excogitation, meditation, and contemplation (*dhyāna*). In less usual cases, however, *śravaṇa* may be followed by *manana* only or by *nididhyāsana* only, the exact procedure being determined by the exigencies of each individual case. We need not enter here into the intricate psychology of the origin of intuition of Reality out of a verbal basis. The Vedāntic view is that word as such in the aforesaid case is capable of producing the direct knowledge concerned.

Vācaspati's View :

Reasoning and *yogic* concentration are only of a disciplinary nature and have no bearing on the origin of knowledge, for which the *mahāvākya* alone is responsible. The other view, however, endorsed by Vācaspati and others, implies that word produces indirect knowledge, which through *manana* and ultimately through *yoga* leads to Self-realisation.

The transfer of or the awakening of spiritual energy may be effected even without any word being spoken. Silence may be the best awakener, as is implied in the saying : *gurostu maunaṁ vyākhyānaṁ śiṣyastu chinnasaṁśayāḥ* — the best teacher is indeed one who can remove

all doubts in the disciple without uttering a single word. The different kinds of *dīkṣā* known as *cākṣuṣī*, *spārśī*, *mānasī*, etc., act silently upon the system and sometimes produce instantaneous results.

Illumination without Word ; Instantaneous Experience :

A pertinent question arises here. Is it possible to have a particular result without passing through the intermediate steps through which that result is known to be manifested ? Can there be a sudden leap in what appears to be a regular evolutionary series ? The answer is 'yes', if we bear in mind the fact that, if adequate causal factors are present, Nature may be made to evolve any particular effect at any particular moment, as is evident from the creative action of the *yogin*'s will on Nature.[4] The strength of the will renders superfluous the intermediate stages of development. The answer would be 'no' if the commonsense view of progressive evolution is taken. The two answers would thus represent two different standpoints. But for all practical purposes they would come up to the same things in spirit. For even if the progressive stages are theoretically admitted, they are incapable of being perceived, owing to the extreme quickness of

4. This is based on the assumption that everything exists everywhere potentially (*sarvaṁ sarvātmakam*) — 'everything in all its aspects'. *Yoga-bhāṣya*, III. 54. What the *yogic* or the Divine Will accomplishes is only to call it into manifestation.

their succession, as in the case of a firebrand in motion (*alāta-cakra*), they are as good as nonexistent.

2

Grace and Its Degrees ; Grace and Human Effort :

The question is asked : how is the difference between graded and sudden illumination to be accounted for ? What is the reason that most of the *sādhakas* have to undergo a prolonged course of discipline in some form or other, while sudden illumination is the privilege of a few ? The question is natural. The answer is that illumination, being due to Divine Grace, any difference in the quality or intensity of Grace is sure to have its effect on the illumination.

It is a truism to say that the soul's union with its source can never be effected except through Divine Grace. Human effort is valuable in so far as it is aided, directly or indirectly, by Divine Grace, and not otherwise. Human effort proceeds from an egoistic consciousness based on the action of *māyā*. By itself it is unable to bring about a condition subversive to egoistic consciousness. The statement in the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* : *yamevaiṣa vṛṇute tena labhyaḥ* — implies that the attainment of God is only the effect of His special favour. Nobody can aspire to know Him until and unless He Himself desires to be known. Grace, not the personal effort, is the key to the solution of the riddle of life. This being so, the nature and intensity of Grace alone can explain the difference in illumination. Grace can work miracles. It may or may not

take into account the soul's spiritual activities. Free Grace descends unsolicited and acts independently. The overflowing grace (*ahaitukī-kṛpā*) descends on a man burning up his *karmas* in a moment, and transforms him into a realised one. A devotee says to his Mother :

kva vā vaidhī sṛṣṭiḥ patati yadi dṛṣṭistava śive ?

Where does the creation of the world-architect, with its irrevocable laws and rigorous causality, remain, when, O beneficent Mother, Thy merciful glance falls on the soul ?

Augustinian View :

St. Augustine, a great Christian mystic of the early Christian Church, thinks that eternal life is won by merit only, and that merit is established by good works. But the ability to perform good works comes by Divine Grace. Hence even the merits of men are really the gifts of God. The mediaeval Schoolmen of Europe, following Augustine, held that baptismal grace puts men only into a condition to win merit. Works cannot be called meritorious unless done from the principle of love infused in the heart by the spirit of God.[5] In this case too the importance of Grace cannot be overestimated.

5. In Vedic and Tāntrika systems of spiritual culture, the truth of this principle is exemplified in the belief that a man cannot take part in formal and real spiritual activities until he is initiated by the investiture of sacred thread (*upanayana*)

There are several ways of approaching the problem, viz., :

(*i*) God's Will working in response to and supplementing man's *karma*.

(*ii*) *Karma* in response to and supplementing God's Will.

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or by initiation (*dīkṣā*). One without initiation cannot have the sanction of the *śāstras* for conducting a formal religious life.

As Alexander of Hales puts it, both merit and grace are said to have two degrees each :

(*i*) *Merit* :

(*a*) *Meritum de Congruo* :

This merit is rewarded by God as His mercy goes beyond strict justice.

(*b*) *Meritum de Condigno* :

To this merit God gives a reward in strict justice.

(*ii*) *Grace* :

(*a*) *Gratia Gratis Data* :

This is General Grace.

(*b*) *Gratia Gratum Faciens* :

This is Saving Grace.

It is affirmed that the second kind of merit is possible only through Saving Grace, but the former kind of merit is possible through General Grace.

Hence even the General Grace may be merited.

Others, however, *e.g.*, St. Thomas Aquinas, are of the opinion that merit is not possible before baptism. All merit due to free will is *de Congruo* and all merit due to grace is *de Condigno*. Gabriel Biel says that a man who does with what is in him can merit *de Congruo* the grace which enables him *de Condigno* to merit salvation.

(*iii*) God's Will working independently and in a self-sufficient manner while *karma* is in abeyance.

(*iv*) *Karma* is supreme.

(*v*) God's Will acting in opposition to human will and *karma*.

(*vi*) One Supreme Power working: The two Wills are really two simultaneous aspects of the same Power.

It has been shown that no spiritual progress is possible without the Grace of God and that the influx of Grace is a free act, in so far as it is always unmerited and can never be invoked by any amount of penance or exertions on the part of the aspirant. It is said in the *Gītā*:

nāhaṁ vedairna tapasā na dānena na cejjyayā .
śakya evaṁvidho draṣṭuṁ dṛṣṭavānasi māṁ yathā ..

Not by the *Vedas* or grim-ascetic-practice, not by the giving of alms or sacrifice, can I be seen in such a form as you did see Me.[6]

and

mayā prasannena tavārjunedaṁ
rūpaṁ paraṁ darśitam ātmayogāt .
tejomayaṁ viśvam anantamādyaṁ
yan me tvadanyena na dṛṣta-pūrvam ..

Because I desired to show you favour, Arjuna, by my Self's own power I have shown you my highest

6. XI. 53. *The Bhagavadgita*, Tr. by R. C. Zaehner.

form — glorious, all-embracing, infinite, primeval, which none but you have ever seen before.[7]

God, the Source of Grace :

We may observe in this connection that whatever may be our attitude to God (*Īśvara*) and the human soul (*jīva*), they stand with each other in certain unalterable relations. They may be related essentially with mutually co-ordinated aspects or without aspects, but from an empirical standpoint the relation between the two may persist. Man acts and God rewards his action or punishes it. God is thus in charge of the moral administration of the world and maintenance of righteousness and justice.

The naturalists, like the Mīmāṁsakas, hold that every action produces its own reaction in its own natural course as pleasure and pain and nothing else. But the theists insist that an action, in addition to its natural effects, produces salutary or condemnatory effects too. As natural form, owing to its lack of divining power, action by itself cannot bring about any salutary effect unless it is pushed by an all-divining and all-powerful Principle of Holiness, *i.e.*, God. In this conception, it may be pointed out that the true initiative for virtuous action comes from God, who is abounding in mercy and grace. The role of God is not only initial but

7. XI. 47. *The Bhagavadgita*, Tr. by R. C. Zaehner.

all-embracing throughout the action of man, who responded to the primary push of God. Man, as a free being, is open to the initial push or inspiration of God and *either* follows the interior push of God *or* rejects it. It is in this decision of 'either or' that there lies the responsibility of man over his *karma* or action. Thus God remains as the source of grace, while man is open to this Source with his own free nature.

The Christian and the Traditional Hindu View :

Viewed from a higher standpoint, God appears as the Source of all General Grace. In Him there is no discrimination between the virtuous and the wicked, as far as His imparting of grace is concerned. Graciousness being His nature, He always and everywhere bestows it on everyone without partiality. As Christ revealed, "the heavenly Father makes his sun rise on good and bad alike, and sends the rain on the honest and the dishonest"[8] — so grace flows out equally in all directions so that anybody (be he saint or sinner) may drink from it and live on it. In the *Gītā* Lord Kṛṣṇa says : *samo'haṁ sarvabhuteṣu na me dveṣyo'sti na priyaḥ*[9] — meaning that, in a universally gracious God, there is no partiality.

This conception of the Divine is a distinct advance on the preceding one. He is merciful by His very

8. *N. T.,* Mathew, 5, 45.
9. *Gītā*, XI. 47.

nature, and the distribution of His mercy is not dependent on the merit of the receiver. The very impartiality in the act of universal distribution presupposes justice, no doubt, but as it has no bearing on the individual *karma* of the recipient, it is to that extent free. It is like the sun which radiates light evenly in all directions and does it in natural course and not as a deliberate act. It does not make any discrimination. That every man, viz., a stark blind person, is unable to be benefited by this, is of course no fault of the sun whose graciousness is beyond question.

But there is such a thing as Special Grace—Grace which is as it were spontaneous. The grace worked on the conversion of 'Saul to Paul' may be mentioned as an example to this kind of Grace. It is Grace shown by God and experienced by man. Meister Eckart's saying 'Thy knocking and His opening are but one moment' applies to this. According to him, God, bestowing such Grace upon man, is bestowing it upon Himself; and man as receiving such, Grace from God is really receiving it from himself and not from any external source.

Origin of Grace ; *Śaiva-Siddhānta View* :

In certain systems of thought, an attempt has been made to explain the origin of Grace. The rival doctrines of *karma-sāmya* and *mala-pāka* are maintained to account for it in a rational manner. The exponents of the former view, viz., *karma-sāmya* hold that the descent of Divine

Grace is explicable on the assumption of a mental background in the mind, and such a background is possible in consequence of the mutual neutralisation of the opposite forces of *karma*.

The rival theory of *mala-pāka*, which is advocated by the followers of the dualistic Śaiva Āgamas, lays greater emphasis on the gradual maturation, due either to the action of time (*kāla*) or to specific forces operating to that end. Basic impurity (*mala*) of man is conceived as a substance obscuring the innate power of every self, much like the cataract formation on the eye preventing its normal function of vision. Just as a surgical operation, which alone can remove the cataracts, is not possible until the formation is mature, in the same way the defiling substance cannot be removed until it is matured (*pakva*). But as soon as the maturity is reached, the Divine Power as Grace descends upon the soul, and by means of *dīkṣā* removes this source of obscuration and limitation. This process is technically known as *Sāktipāta*, and is intimately associated with the mysteries of Initiation (*dīkṣā*).[10]

Grace and Guru :

Grace comes down from God. But it may come immediately or through an intermediary. As Christ said, "the wind blows where it wills; you hear the sound

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10. Kavirāj, Gopīnāth : *Śaktipāta Rahasya*, an article in Hindi in *Bhāratīya Saṁskṛti aur Sādhanā*, Bihar-Rāṣṭrabhāṣā-Pariṣad, Patna, 1936, pp. 220-237.

of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it is going. So with everyone who is born from the spirit."[11] The usual avenue, however, is through a spiritually illumined *guru*, who receives the Grace himself and then transmits it to the aspirant looking up to him for light and guidance. For God, invisible as He is, works out human sanctification through human media.

So the importance of the teacher (*guru*) can hardly be overlooked. It is recognised in all systems of mystic life, which have bearing on practical life. The *pīr* of the *Ṣūfīs* and the Confessor or the spiritual Director in Christianity during the middle ages correspond to the *ācārya* or *guru* of the Hindus (Vedic and Tāntrika) and the *kalyāṇamitra* of the Buddhists. Buddha's exhortation to Ānanda, asking him to be a lamp unto himself, does not repudiate the importance of the *guru* in the proper sense of the term. Nor does the theory of *guru* (*guru-vāda*) in any sense militate against the view in which the indwelling Spirit, God as dwelling in every heart as *antaryāmin*, is looked upon as *guru par excellence*. The great mystic Ruysbroek says "The truly illumined man flows out in universal charity towards and upon earth....is the intermediary between God and Creation."

The Tāntrika View :

The Tantras affirm that in case of some highly advanced souls, souls which lie absorbed either in

11. *N. T.*, John 3, 8.

mahāmāyā as *vijñāna-kevalins*, or even in *māya* as *pralaya-kevalins* during the Cosmic Night, the Supreme Lord Himself appoints them, pours down His Saving Grace and Wisdom upon them, and revives them on the dawn of the Cosmic Day as Masters of Creation, invested with all the necessary powers of Knowledge (*jñāna*) and Action (*karma*). In this case no intermediary is deemed necessary. But in the period of world activities, the mediation of illumined souls is usually indispensable. I say *usually*, for even in this period, direct action of the Divine Force is possible, though extremely rare. The media through which the Divine Power descends on the seeker are generally of three layers, viz., (*a*) *divya*, (*b*) *siddha*, and (*c*) *mānava*. The ordinary human mind, unless specially purified and prepared for the reception through a process of transformation, is utterly incapable of standing serene before the marvellous blaze of the great illumination. The suddenness of the outburst is simply staggering to it.

Prātibha-jñāna as an Internal Aid to Sādhanā :

A close study of the literature on the great *Prātibha-jñāna*[12] — knowledge which is of the nature of immediate intuition of the Self, would show that in

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12. The *Tripurā-rahasya*, *Jñāna-khaṇḍa*, XX. 36, Sarasvati Bhavana Texts No. 15, 1933, refers to *Pratibhā* as an immediate intuition without any limitations expressive of the Supreme (*Para*).

case of this illumination the need of all external aids is dispensed with. *Guru* and *Śāstra*, as external to the Self of the aspiring devotee, are not needed. The *sādhaka* gets the necessary guidance from within, and also the relevant powers.

In the words of Gopīnāth Kavirāj :

> The word Pratibhā, which literally means a flash of light, a revelation, is usually found in literature in the sense of wisdom characterised by immediacy and freshness. It might be called the supersensuous and suprarational apperception, grasping truth directly, and would, therefore, seem to have the same value, both as a faculty and as an act in Indian Philosophy, as Intuition has in some of the Western systems. From a general survey of the literature concerned and a careful analysis of its contents it would appear that the word is used in two distinct but allied senses :
>
> (*i*) To indicate any kind of knowledge which is not sense-born nor of the nature of an inference. But as such knowledge may range over a wide variety of subjects, it is possible to distinguish it again as lower and higher. The phenomena of ordinary clairvoyance and telepathy are instances of the former, while the latter kind is represented in the supreme wisdom of the saint.
>
> (*ii*) In the latter sense, however, the use of the term is restricted to the Āgamic literature, where it stands for the Highest Divinity, understood as

Principle of Intelligence and conceived as female. In other words, Pratibhā, otherwise known as Parā Saṃvit or Citi Śakti, means in the Āgama, especially in the Tripurā and Trika sections of it, the power of self-revelation or self-illumination of the Supreme Spirit, with which it is essentially and eternally identical. The employment of the word in the sense of 'guru' (as in Abhinavagupta, *Tantra-sāra*, p. 120) comes under this second head.

The prime characteristic of this supersensuous knowledge is, as we have observed, its immediacy and intense clarity. According to all the systems such knowledge is considered transcendental, being held to be free from the time and space limitations, which are imposed as a matter of necessity on all inferior knowledge and from the indispensable conditions which govern the origin or manifestation of the latter. Consequently we find in every respect a strongly marked contrast between the two. This higher knowledge dispenses, in its rise, with the need of sense-organs and unlike reflective judgement, with that of the rational faculty. It reveals the past and the future as in a single flash, and also the absent and the remote. Nothing escapes its searching light. It is aptly described as simultaneously illuminating everything in every aspect and as eternal (*Yoga Sūtra* III, 54).

In Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika and occasionally in Vedānta the term Pratibhā and sometimes Ārṣa

Jñāna is employed to express this supreme knowledge, a term which has the sanction of usage in Yoga literature. The word Prajñā too is sometimes used in Yoga works as a synonym of Pratibhā. In Vyākaraṇa both Prajñā and Pratibhā are to be found and these are declared identical in sense with the Paśyanti stage of the fourfold Vāk. The Āgamas retain all these terms and add Saṁveda to the list of synonyms. The Buddhists are familiar with the name Prajñā even in their oldest canonical literature, but do not seem to know anything of Pratibhā or the other terms. But the Jainas have curiously enough, not a single one of these words in their philosophical vocabulary though they have fully treated of the subject in their works. They have discussed the question in their own way and under their own technical appellations *e.g.*, *avadhijñāna*, *kevalajñāna* and so forth. From a survey of the entire field it will be evident that the problem has recurred everywhere and has everywhere, to all appearances, been similarly dealt with.[13]

Dīkṣā in Tāntrika-sādhanā :

Tāntrika culture in the proper sense of the term is based upon 'initiation' (*dīkṣā*). *Dīkṣā* is not really

13. Kavirāj, Gopīnāth : *The Doctrine of Pratibhā in Indian Philosophy*, an article in *Aspects of Indian Thought*, The University of Burdwan, 1966, pp. 1-3.

the formal act which goes under that name, but represents an influx of spiritual energy into a particular soul, conveyed from a Divine Source (in the last resort), and resulting in the transformation of the human soul concerned. It is really a practical fulfilment of an urge of Divine Grace, rendered imperative owing to the maturity of the original veil of obscuration which makes the Divine put on an air of animality (*aṇutva*).

Dīkṣā is of various kinds and the classification follows different principles in different contexts. As the human soul is at bottom a spark of the Divine, it follows that its spiritual evolution cannot be held as complete until its hidden divinity is brought out. It is said :

> *dīyate jñānasadbhāva kṣīyate paśuvāsanā .*
> *dānakṣapaṇasaṁyuktā dīkṣā teneha kīrtitā ..*

That is, by which knowledge (*jñāna*) is given (*dīyate*) and lower impulses and desires are weakened (*kṣīyate*) — this twofold activities of 'giving' and 'weakening' is called *Dīkṣā*.

The dual function of *dīkṣā* represents the negative and positive aspects of the divinisation of the soul. These two aspects are recognised as destruction of the bonds (*pāṣa-kṣaya*) and fulfilment of Divinity (*pūrṇatva-yoga*). It is not possible in this place to give a clear and consistent account of the entire process of spiritual *sādhanā* from this point of view. All that can be said is that *dīkṣā*, if properly effected, enables the soul, by its very act to pass beyond the limitations of *karma* and *māyā* which hamper the soul and stand

in the way of its higher realisation. True mystical life from the Tāntrika point of view, therefore, does not aim at attainment of higher planes of life with their joys and powers nor does it consist in an attainment of *kaivalya* which is after all a spiritual emptiness in the light of divine perfection.[14]

The negative phase of the process of initiation (*dīkṣā*) renders the soul free from the possibility of any further contact with matter in its lower forms. Infusion of Grace is possible to a soul in the actual embodied condition or it may occur to it when it is disembodied during destruction (*pralaya*), being either merged in *māyā* or if it has already transcended it, in *mahāmāyā*. In the latter two cases the Divine Grace descends on the soul directly from the Supreme Source; but in the former, the mediation of an embodied *guru* is held to be necessary. In all the three cases what happens is that the soul is invested with a body of knowledge made up of Pure Matter (*mahāmāyā*). Hence *dīkṣā* takes place in the embodied condition of the soul.

The knowledge-body or gnostic-body (*jñāna-deha*) referred to above exists side by side with the body of impure matter, but when the soul is bodiless beyond *māyā* and receives Divine Grace, it is furnished with the gnostic body and is endowed with Divine Power. It has no body of impure matter attached to it, for it has already gone beyond the limits of *māyā*. In case

14. See *Kaivalya in Dualistic Tāntric Culture*, an article in *Aspects of Indian Thought*, by Gopīnāth Kavirāj, pp. 128-137.

of the disembodied condition in *māyā* itself, the descent of Divine Grace clothes the soul in a dual body of pure and impure matter at one and the same time.

The evolution of the soul after *dīkṣā* represents a gradual development of all its divine powers, culminating in the end in perfect deification. As to the question whether the deified soul is capable of being distinguished from the Supreme Divinity, there are different opinions among the ancient mystics. The monistic thinkers of the Kashmir school of Śaivism hold the view that there is absolutely no difference between *Mukta-Śiva* and *Parama-Śiva*; but the dualistic mystics of Southern India, the Śaiva-Siddhāntins, hold the view that the *Mukta-Śiva*, even though free from matter of all shades, and restored to its original divine status, retains a semblance of distinction from the Absolute Divinity or *Parama-Śiva*.

In the course of this evolution, three important stages may be noted as follows :

(1) In the first place, there is the stage of *adhikāra*, in which the soul is allowed to exercise its divine power in connection with the spiritual administration of the world.

(2) In the second place, we have the stage of *bhoga*, in which the divinised soul retires from cosmic activities and is rapt in universal Self-delight (*ātmaramaṇa*) inherent in its nature.

(3) The third stage represents an advance on the first two stages. It is a condition of Absolute Silence (*laya*).

The Tāntrika culture does not attach much importance to the state of *kaivalya*, although as a state of freedom from matter, *kaivalya* has certainly a claim to one's consideration. Different kinds of *kaivalya*, based on freedom from different kinds of matter, impure and pure, are of course recognised. But it is not considered to be of much worth by itself, as even in its highest condition it does not represent an accession to the divine power (*śivatva*), which is the birthright of every human soul.[15]

Tāntrika-sādhanā and Its Stages :

The mystic way, according to the Tāntrika culture,

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15. For a lucid and elaborate presentation of the details of Tāntrika spiritual culture, the reader is referred to the following articles by Gopīnāth Kavirāj, embodied in his *Bhāratīya Saṁskṛti aur Sādhanā*, published by Bihar-Rāṣṭra-Bhāṣā-Pariṣad, Patna, 1963 :

(1) *Śaktipāta-rahasya* (in Bengali) (Descent of Divine Grace), pp. 220-237.

(2) *Dīkṣā-rahasya* (in Bengali) (Mysteries of Tāntrika Initiation), pp. 265-301.

(3) *Guru-tattva aur Sadguru-rahasya* (in Bengali) (The essence of a true master and the mystery of a *Sadguru*), pp. 253-264.

(4) *Tāntrika-dṛṣṭi* (in Bengali) (A Tāntrika view), pp. 23-43, and

(5) *Tāntrika Sādhanār Goḍār Kathā* (in Bengali), (The basic principles of Tāntrika culture), published in *Uttarā*, a Bengali Journal.

represents a path of progressive realisation, each state of discipline and realisation being technically called a *bhāva*. The radical sense of the term *bhāva* is of course the Supreme Divinity or *Para Brahman*. But in the Tāntrika literature the word conveys the meaning of a particular state in spiritual life which results from a particular ritual (*ācāra*), associated with *Brahman*. The animal (*paśu*), the heroic (*vīra*), and the divine (*divya*) are the three states of consciousness or *bhāvas* through which every mystic has to pass. There are three kinds of rituals (*ācāra*) corresponding to the lowest or animal state (*paśu-bhāva*). All the worshippers come under the common category of *sa-bhāva-paśu*. There is another class of *paśu* called *vi-bhāva*. The next higher state, called *vīra*, is also of two kinds, according as it is with or without *bhāva*. The order of progression may be stated as follows :

(*a*) *Paśu* with *bhāva*.

(*b*) *Paśu* without *bhāva*.

(*c*) *Vīra* with *bhāva*.

(*d*) *Vīra* without *bhāva*.[16]

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16. Śivanatha's *Memoir on Sarvānanda*, a great Tāntrika saint of Meherā, quotes a passage showing the use of the term *sa-bhāva-paśu*, in the sense of a worshipper of male gods alone and the terms *vi-bhāva-paśu*, *vi-bhāva-vīra*, and *vi-bhāva-divya*, in the sense of the worshippers of *Śakti*.

According to the Tantras, worship of *Śakti* requires as indispensable the use of the five *tattvas.*[17] It is said that in the case of *vi-bhāva-paśu*, the five *tattvas* are employed through their substitutes (*anukalpa*) only, but not in their original form. The distinction between the two kinds of *paśu* consists in this, that while in the one, the animal state (*paśu-bhāva*) persists, in the other it has disappeared altogether. But it is to be noted that though the animal state has disappeared, the next higher state of the hero (*vīra-bhāva*) has not yet asserted itself. It is for this reason that he is not entitled to worship with the real *tattvas*, for which only the heroes (*vīras*) are qualified. But even among

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17. Five *tattvas*, also called *pañca-makāras* are as follows :

madyaṁ māṁsaṁ tathā matsyaṁ mūdrā maithunamevaca .
makāra pañcakaṁ devī devatā prītidāyakam ..

Kaulāvalī Nirṇaya

That is,

Liquor, meat, fish, *mudrā*, and copulation, these, O Goddess ! are five 'M's, which give the favour of gods.

The five 'M's are enumerated in many Tantras. The practice of five 'M's or *pañca-makāras* or *pañca-tattvas* finds an important place in the ritualistic hierarchy of left-handed path (*vāma-mārga*). This pentad 'M's applies in the union of *Śiva* and *Śakti*. The idea behind this *sādhanā* is that the individual can and must progress from the lower to the higher disposition (*i.e.*, from *paśu-bhāva* to *divya-bhāva*). A person starting off with *sādhānā* in the lower dispositions advances automatically into the higher reaches of *Tāntrika-sādhānā*. Although the practice of *pañca-makāra* gets sanction in the Tāntrika tradition, many works on Tantras either do not mention or condemn these practices. Rāmakṛṣṇa used to warn his disciples asking them to stay away from this path.

the *vīras*, those who are called *vi-bhāva* are not so entitled. For these *vīras* are exempted from external worship. Mental worship (*mānasa-pūjā*) alone is enjoined for them. These two classes of worshippers, viz., the *vi-bhāva-paśu* and *vi-bhāva-vīra* are not allowed to engage in the worship of the *Śakti* in the proper sense of the term. They can worship Her only as Virgin (*Kumārī*).

There are three distinct cults connected with the true heroic state (*vīra-bhāva*). These cults are named (1) *dakṣinācāra*, (2) *vāmācāra*, and (3) *siddhāntācāra*. These cults are associated with three different methods of worshipping *Śakti*. They are described as follows :

(*a*) In the first one, viz., *dakṣinācāra*, the worshipper, before undertaking the worship, is transformed into *Śiva*; but in the following stage of culture, the transformation represents a further state in advance, as a result of which *Śiva* is further converted into *Śakti*.

(*b*) In *vāmācāra*, *Śakti* is worshipped by one who has become identified with *Śakti* Herself. The common feature of these two kinds of worship is that the worship is external.[18] In both these forms of worship, viz., the right (*dakṣiṇa*) and the left (*vāma*), dualism does not disappear altogether.

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18. However, *Mahānirvāṇa Tantra* describes external worship as said to be the lowest of the low. It says :

uttamo brahmo sadbhāvo dhyānabhāvastu madhyamaḥ.
stutirjapo'dhamo bhāvo bahiḥ pūjā'dhamā'dhamā ..

(*c*) The third cult is that of *siddhānta*, so called because it is identical with *Śiva* Himself. In this state absolute monism is realised, and even the slightest distinction between *Śakti* and *Śiva* is removed.

The last cult is called *divya-bhāva*, corresponding to which there is *divya-ācāra*. This is to be distinguished from the transcendent *kaula*. There is no doubt that in both *divya-ācāra* and *kaula-ācāra* there is hardly any room for injunctions and regulations. But while in one, the consciousness of the worshipper is turned into a glorious energy pervading the world, the colour of which is that of the Deity worshipped; in the other, the union is even far more perfect, so that in it the distinction between knowledge and the object known disappears altogether.[19]

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19. See *Introduction to Sarvollāsa Tantra* of Sarvānanda, by Dinesh Candra Bhattacarya.

CHAPTER XIII

MYSTICISM AND SOCIETY

The controversy and criticism — Defence of Mysticism — Mysticism and the humane pursuits — Mystics and Integral Action — Realisation essential to life of service — Is mysticism isolationism ?

The Controversy and Criticism :

The nexus between the pursuit of the mystical path and the social and communal obligations of man is an extremely controversial question. Controversy, we know, is very often the consequence of ignorance and misunderstanding. Unfortunately, this is exactly what we see in regard to the controversy over the nature and validity of the mystic's pursuit and the practice of the presence of God. Much vague thinking on the point has come out not merely from those who have in a cavalier manner dismissed mysticism as the religion of the isolationists, escapists, and obscurantists, but also from those who hold that for those who have hitched their wagon to a supramundane ideal. It is needless to point out that both the sides err in their enthusiasm to defend their respective stands and are

unable to adopt that balanced approach which alone can help them visualise the truth.

The truth about what mysticism stands for has, however, been set forth in unambiguous terms in the earliest and best exposition of the Indian *bhakti* path, the *Bhagavad Gītā*, which will be for us the starting point in the examination of the relation between mysticism and society. *Śāntiṁ nirvāṇaparamāṁ matsaṁsthāmadhigacchati*, says the *Gītā*, in reference to the *yogin* who enjoys the bliss of Supreme Realisation. This means that a complete withdrawal of mind from the demands of the world, and an exclusive and unruffled concentration upon God, is essential in order that the *yogin* may feel the complete absorption and effacement of his individuality in God. Then and then alone he will realise his permanent abode in the Creator.[1]

The *yogin* thus abides in God and realises the ineffable peace and bliss resulting therefrom only if he is able to achieve complete self-effacement and self-surrender. The *Gītā* prescribes the discipline which is conducive to a perfect union between man and God which means that the mental gaze needs to be focussed solely on the self in a state of absolute peace. In a still higher state, with the gaze now unshakably focussed on God, peace transcends into a bliss of which there is no comparison. The withdrawal of the mind is of course a gradual process, and so too is its concen-

1. *Gītā*, VI. 51.

tration upon the self within. At the highest state, when the *yogin* has achieved the union with the Divine, he attains the state of *Brahman*. Defining this state, the *Gītā* states that the *yogin* then sees himself in everything, and *vice versa*; similarly, on account of his union with God, he feels the presence of God in everything and also everything in God. Nothing can be a better illustration of what the poet has described as the state of being true to the kindred points of heaven and home.

Similarly, this also illustrates the true mystic state, in which the exclusive preoccupation with the intuition of Reality finally invests the mystic with a state of mind in which all reflections are tinged with the awareness of Divinity. So it is said, "As soon as the *yogin* can detach himself from his lower self of passions and desires, he uplifts himself to a higher universe, where...the interest of the individual loses its personal limitations and becomes enlarged and universalised and identified with the interests of all living beings."[2]

The mystic thus is no escapist; his is no philosophy of inaction. On the other hand, it is the mystic approach alone which paves the way for and guarantees the best possible humanitarianism in which the fundamental inspiring principle is the *yogin*'s intimate personal relation with God viewed not merely as the great source and archetype of Power, Glory, and Majesty,

2. Dasgupta, S. N. : *A History of Indian Philosophy*, Vol. II. Cambridge, 1961, p. 451.

but as the best of friends and teachers, as the incarnation of Love and Compassion. To him alone who through *sādhanā* has been able to reach the highest stage of self-abnegation, absolute humility, and the deepest devotion He reveals Himself. This is certainly the highest mystic consciousness; and the conclusion from this — that one who reaches this state does not suffer from any crippling inertia, but on the other hand sees his whole being energised for the highest types of completely unselfish action — is inescapable.

Defence of Mysticism :

To take up the wrong and prejudiced notions of criticism in respect of mysticism, we find that there are some who believe that the mystics are of no use to society, and that they at best lead a life of enlightened selfishness, doing no service to the world in which they are born. This belief is based apparently on the fact that many mystics go in for a life of seclusion, away from men and society. The fact is not denied. An account of the mystics of the world will amply testify to its correctness. But it does not necessarily mean that all mystics shun society. As to whether they live in society or in solitude is a question of personal choice, and is dependent upon circumstances of a varying nature.

But a mystic, wherever he may live, continues generally to serve humanity during his period of probation,

which is commensurate with the purest desires of ministering to others. These desires which fill his heart constitute an important and essential part of his yearned-for Divine Intuition. Moreover, these desires call for absolutely selfless action. However, it is also a fact that such service is not obligatory for all. There are a few, who on the strength of saintliness and the rectitude of their past lives are privileged to serve humanity after having realised the Supreme Reality. But those for whom it is necessary — and their number is vast — render their services in various ways consistent with the quality and capacity of their attainments and essential temperaments. It is these latter who are known as *adhikārins* in Vedānta and in the Āgamas. They continue in the state of *jīvanmukti*, the state just prior to the state of complete absorption in the Divine, until by their selfless action they have been able to exhaust their *prārabdha karma*, *i.e.*, the actions done previously, the fruits of which are just ripening. From the point of view of each of them, all service and all involvement in the amelioration of the world is directed to the satiation and fulfilment of the demands of the inexorable *prārabdha* for which each is directly responsible. The scriptures repeatedly emphasise the absolute necessity in this regard.

Likewise, the seriousness of the obligation involved in this is never lost sight of. It is pointed out that a human being may require one life or even a series of lives to work out the previous *karma,* through the expiatory and neutralising deeds of love and service. Some of these lives may even be on planes other

than the one on which a mystic is presently placed. This means that even from a supra-terrestrial plane these ameliorative works may be pursued and from them benefit will flow to the worldly people. There may be no proximity between the helper and the helped in this case. The helper will not, at any rate, be visible to the helped. But such distance will not preclude the possibility of the shower of benedictions flowing from the blessed soul to the mortal millions of the world.

In the *Gītā*, to refer to it again, in which the law of *karma* finds a wonderful exposition, God exhorts Arjuna to apply himself to the duties entailed upon him by the law of *karma*, though never looking for the fruits accruing to the duties. Thus alone can he be true to his own essential being and to God. The philosophy of the *Gītā* is an assimilation and the cream of many schools of thought. But essentially its path is the path of undiluted devotion (*bhakti*). This is doubly significant inasmuch as *bhakti*, which is liable to be misinterpreted as a supine dependence on God, is in reality the motive force inspiring the best action in the direction of the commonweal.

Mysticism and the Humane Pursuits :

There are, quite intelligibly, hundreds of instances to show how the mystics in their worldly lives pass the post-realisation stage in complete devotion to the moral and spiritual welfare of others. Many of them even live in the midst of all the customs and con-

ventions of their social set-up, and still continue to be ministering angels to others, bringing about remarkable changes in many with whom the mystics come into contact. To come to the actual examples, we find that if in the cases of the Buddha and the Christ, the ministration came from the higher supraterrestrial planes into which they had passed after departure from this world; in the case of Samartha Rāmadāsa, the mystic preceptor of the great Mārāṭhā king, Śivājī, and St. Bernard and others, the absorption in the work of amelioration and welfare made itself felt in their earthly lives. It means that the perfect dawning of the spirittual light upon them proved to be an impetus for constructive activity, with the aim of the betterment and regeneration of others' lives. The mystics of modern India, whose lives we will study into, in the succeeding pages, have all been examples of this latter type.

A teacher in a kindergarten school arranges attractive toys and dolls for her little pupils. There they come and play, fraternise and wrangle, upset the tidy arrangement or try to arrange everything in their own childish ways. The teacher has to look to everything. She cannot but feel that everything is so childish and devoid of any ostensible purpose or plan. Yet with love and care she always arranges the children's games. To her all this may be apparently meaningless, but there is a reality hidden within — the foundational part of juvenile education — the importance of which she never fails to realise and which impels her to allow the children's games to go on merrily every day. That is also the case with the mystic. Whether he

has realised it already, or is on the way towards its realisation, his heart and soul are set upon the illimitable ocean of peace. Nothing matters to him at all but the adventure of shedding all worldly ties and egoistic pull in order to establish the most intimate bond with the Supreme Reality. Yet the world as it is, which can only serve as an impediment in his path, he never looks down upon. Conscious of his own spiritual evolution, he sees a reflection of the same in the world which unfolds before him as a becoming process, as the expression of a divine purpose. While the weight of the customs and conventions of the world cannot press him under it, while he realises fully that whatever ties he has with the world are ties with the transitory and hence useless part of his being, he does not hesitate to accept the limitations and conditions of the world, simply because he is convinced of their being a part of the cosmic evolution and divine decree.

Moreover, as a study of *Ṣūfī* mysticism will make clear, that the Self-realised mystic is fully conscious of his newly obtained responsibility. His period of probation along the spiritual path being over, he is now to act as God's governor in regard to His subjects on the earthly level. It has thus been very correctly said that the mystics are the men who are the agents and instruments, as it were, of God's administration of the world. They live in the pure regions and look with their clear vision, compassion, and constructive zeal on suffering humanity, which leads them to take upon themselves the task of an uplifting of the entire world order. It will not be an exaggeration to

say that the Self-realised mystics are the divinely-appointed superintendents to facilitate the process of cosmic evolution in different stages.

But how long is their tenure of service to last ? The answer is, it may be for a short period, or it may even extend to ages. The crux of the matter is that they will be ordained to serve until their deep-seated desires (*vāsanā*) for service and philanthropic action are fully satiated. At the point of satiety they will certainly retire into the Beyond and live in Eternity. It is then alone that they will attain complete liberation to live eternally in bliss.

There may be still others over above the two categories just mentioned, with whom this life of service is likely to continue through Eternity. In this respect the mystics of this category stand apart among all others. As a matter of fact, their lives represent the aspect of Active Compassion in the Eternal Truth Itself. They have no separate existence of their own as distinct from God. Out of the infinite aspects of God's illimitable Being, Compassion too is an eternal divine aspect. They become divine, and all the divine attributes are radiated by their personalities. Like God, they may be described as perpetually and integrally active and at the same time actionless. Just as it is futile to describe God through human language, these God-intoxicated souls also defy all attempts at description. They are everything, yet essentially beyond and above everything; present everywhere, yet themselves above all presence. While it seems they are active, they act not, because being part and parcel of the Supreme,

they enjoy a state of unruffled peace and steadiness. The law of *karma*, inexorable in its function as far as we are concerned, does not touch them at all. Yet while, for this reason, they are absolutely free from action, they act the most. They are above all attachments and all moral obligations and have no duties of their own. This is what the *Gītā*[3] describes as the *kṛtsna-karma*.

The Mystics and Integral Action :

Elsewhere in this book we have amply spoken upon the meaning and purport of the law of *karma* in the background of the mystic pursuit. In the present context it will suffice to say that the highest kind of action according to the *Gītā* is 'integral action', which the Saṁskrit term, just quoted, indicates. The *Gītā* has its highest excellence in its emphasis on complete self-abnegation and self-surrender of the *yogin* to God; but this does not mean that the body and mind are to be made completely motionless and inactive in order to be in God's contact. On the other hand, all the faculties are seen in a bond of complete integration, with the self-surrender of the *yogin* and with his mind fixed unswervingly on God. Non-attachment, self-control, and purity are the prizes of this self-surrender, so much so that with these qualities manifest in him, the *yogin* surrenders everything, which he otherwise would have called his own, to

3. IV. 18.

Him. The Vedic hymns picture a personal relationship between the devotee and God. The *Gītā* adumbrates a condition of continuous action of the non-attached type, an action characterised by the qualities of compassion, universal friendship, contentment, and humility as the only road to liberation and also as the only preoccupation for the *yogin* in the post-enlightenment stage. The rare souls about whom we have spoken above are the mystics in whom integral action is consummated to such a degree that they appear not as beings but as incarnations of God upon the earth.

The rationale behind the above formulations will not be difficult to find out. The three poles among which we are moving are the individual as the worldly self, the individual seen as the self-expression of the cosmic and the universal, and the individual seen as the lamp in which the flame of the Self-knowledge burns eternally. In the Vedic literature the very expressive phrase 'the guest within' is used to denote the eternal manifestation of the Supreme in the individual. It is this 'guest' who has to be realised, and thus is the essence of the creature-hood of man in this world to be fully realised.

The mystic pursuit is to remove the hiatus among the three poles. While armed with pure knowledge, he knows and realises himself, and he also knows and realises everything else, because the common bond of the Supreme Presence unites and absorbs everything and every object. This is the truest gnosis, for it is this which helps the individual to brave the ascent which is the last and the best, the ascent to the level of the Transcendent. The mystic who attains this state gains

true liberation. Then only he realises the conviction *so'ham*, 'He am I'. This, we may hardly repeat, is the manifestation of the integral personality—the *summum bonum* for all the great mystics of the world. A lucid exposition of this has been done by Śrī Aurobindo, himself, a great sage and mystic, and we think that all those who want to have light on this great spiritual reality should refer to Śrī Aurobindo's *The Life Divine* and *The Synthesis of Yoga.*

Realisation Essential to Life of Service :

The Indian conception has ever been that the genuine life of service cannot even begin before one has attained Truth Consciousness. It is not possible for a man to be serviceable to others before he has served himself, has realised his own imperative objective in life. An ignorant man, not knowing the truth of his own being and of the beings of others in the light of the Supreme Truth, which is nothing but the revelation of the Divine, can have neither the will nor the power of effectively accomplishing the good of others : *svayamasiddhaḥ kathamanyaṁ sādhayet.* And this repeats the age-old wisdom in the statement that one who is blind himself cannot lead another who is similarly blind. If Wisdom has not dawned upon one, how does he dare try to illumine another's path ? So it is said that the Wise alone shall serve. Wisdom and Illumination are the conditions antecedent to the service of humanity. Between knowledge and service the connec-

ting link is furnished by Compassion (*karuṇā*). The spirit of effective solicitude or compassion for the sufferings of others cannot arise and cannot motivate man's intercourse with all fellow creatures unless and until man has reached the summit of Wisdom (*prajñā*) through which alone he comes to an end of individual suffering. It is said in *Yoga-bhāṣya* (I. 47) :

prajñāprāsādamāruhya aśocyaḥ śocato janān .
bhūmiṣṭhāniva śailasthaḥ sarvān prājño'nupaśyati . .

Just as one ascended aloft on an eminence sees those others who are moving at the base, so does the conquerer of sorrow, standing high up in the casement of his light of knowledge, see those who are still the victims of sorrow and suffering.

We are reminded of Lucretius in his *De Rerum Natura* in the above context, for the correspondence of thought between this off-quoted Saṁskrit verse and Lucretius is striking. The latter says :

"It is a pleasure to stand upon the shore, and to see ships tossed upon the sea; a pleasure to stand in the window of a castle, and to see the battle, and the adventures thereof below; but no pleasure is comparable to the standing upon the vantage ground of truth".

The lotus of compassion (*karuṇā-puṇḍarīka*) blossoms only when the sun of *prajñā-pāramitā*, the highest wisdom, rises on the horizon of Inner Consciousness.

The *Upaniṣad* states :

As a man when in the embrace of his beloved wife knows nothing without or within, so the person

> when in the embrace of his intelligent self knows nothing without or within. That, verily, is his form in which his desire is fulfilled, in which the self is his desire, free from any sorrow. There (in that state) a father is not a father, a mother is not a mother, the worlds are not the worlds, the gods are not the gods, the Vedas are not the Vedas. ....He is not followed (affected) by good, he is not followed by evil for then he has passed beyond all sorrows of the heart. [4]

This is the state when the highest goal has been reached, when Self has realised its oneness with Being (*Brahman*). It can thus be understood from this that suffering results from the wrong attachment of the self to the transient objects of the world. Sufferings are overcome when the self is able to shed all such attachments and bind itself to the final and inescapable truth. The sufferings increase according to the degree to which the transient objects are mistakenly taken for eternity, and they decrease accordingly with the progressive detachment from the worldly objects.

It therefore follows logically that suffering, in spite of its intensity and an apparent unendingness, can never be the ultimate reality. It may appear to be so to a mind which lives in the watertight compartment of the ego and which seems to derive its worth solely from concentration on the things conditioned by time and space. But the dawning of true knowledge which,

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4. Radhakrishnan, S. : *The Principal Upaniṣads*, pp. 262-263.

reveals the Being everywhere and eternally, also signals the liquidation of all sufferings. The *Upaniṣadic* simile is very appropriate : 'As water does not cling to the lotus leaf, so evil does not cling to one who knows It'. A completely detached and singleminded pursuit of the Being is, therefore, the clue to the liquidation of all suffering. One who sets his goal thus, says Śaṅkara, 'sorrows not, because he is not connected with the sources of grief'.[5] But at the same time, the goal has to be pursued, as worldly things are, from the basis of worldly life, the world of false knowledge, delusion, and suffering. These cannot be ignored, and quite necessarily all progress along the prospect leading to the *Ātman-Brahman* equation must take cognizance of existing reality.

Hence there is the need for right action and the correct perspective, instead of any deliberate neglect or an indifference to the present circumstances. The *Maitrī Upaniṣad* clearly states that to each one is prescribed the basic duties, in accordance with the stage of life to which he belongs. This is the *dharma*, the observance of which is a condition antecedent to his success along the higher path. *Dharma* is also defined as appropriate action with an eye towards eliminating the causes of suffering from the world, the ultimate victory over suffering coming only with the inner transcendence described above.

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5. *śokādi-nimittāsaṁyogāt*, Radhakrishnan, S. : *The Principal Upaniṣads*, p. 180.

One of the greatest of the mystic savants of the world, the Buddha, was second to none in his deep consciousness of the sufferings of the world. As a matter of fact, the entire world-view in Buddha's teachings is constructed from the continuous suffering of the created world, and his prescription of a path for man's conquest of suffering constitutes the substance of his metaphysical thoughts. Like all great men, the Buddha was neither ashamed of nor afraid of going against the conventional path. His voice was that of the Self-realised inner spirit, boldly expressing itself through accents and logic founded upon the deepest conviction. His general mode of life, similarly, was suffused with the spirit of universal compassion, which extended itself even to the lowest forms of animal life.

In his teachings, Buddha, than whom nobody was more daring in speaking the truth, preferred to remain silent when metaphysical riddles were posed before him. And why ? It was for nothing else but for his deep yearning and solicitude for the spiritual and moral welfare of all others. Like Socrates, he wanted the questioner to solve the riddle himself; he thought, and rightly so, that the latter's welfare depended upon his ability to muster judgment, knowledge, and discernment in order to reap the fruit of fresher knowledge. This was the Buddha's practical morality and the expression of his ardent solicitude for everybody else's welfare. A compassionate nature, we can thus say, is one of the fundamental traits distinguishing a Self-realised mystic of the stature and eminence of the Buddha. It is one who puts forth an ideal to all others proceeding along the mystic path.

It may be construed that the life of the Christ or that of the Buddha or Caitanya was great on account of the service which each of them rendered to humanity. Service in itself is no religion. Coming to essentials what constitutes the essence of religion and the impulse to service is the elimination of the illusion of separateness of the finite from the Infinite, and the consummation of the union of the individual with the Divine. Service is only the outer expression of this unitary realisation, which is always inner. Without the fertilization issuing out of the inner being, inundated with grace and rendered gleaming with the realisation of gnosis, all external formality, howsoever pious it may appear, is as unfruitful as desert sand, reflecting no merit upon the doer and effecting no genuine improvement of the other who is the object of it.

Is Mysticism Isolationism ?

Philosophically speaking, the mystic path may appear to be leading to something of an isolationistic standpoint. The Biblical Psalm, "O taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man that trusteth in him", [6] may be construed to mean that this is such a specious way of admitting that the faithful has reached a dead end. He is standing helplessly between two worlds, one

6. *The Book of Psalms,* 34. 8.

already rejected and the other still unrealised. In such a condition he cannot but go in for a life of reclusion. Or the famous enlightened hymn in *The Dhammapada* may be pointed out as the Buddhistic admission of a similar isolationism. The hymn, in Irving Babbit's translation, runs as follows :

Looking for the maker of this tabernacle
I ran to no avail
Through a round of many births ;
And wearisome is birth again and again.
But now, maker of the tabernacle, thou hast been seen;
Thou shalt not rear this tabernacle again.
All thy rafters are broken,
Thy ridge-pole is shattered;
The mind approaching the Eternal,
Has attained to the extinction of all desires. [7]

But before we hasten to formulate any judgment we ought to be circumspect and discerning. Neither the Christ nor the Buddha is an isolationist, though both of them may seem to be so. In both, mysticism reaches the supreme heights of realisation and in the teachings of both there is a vigorous and deliberate effort at combating the evils that might creep into the disciples. But because all mystics are not Christs and Buddhas, there are of course a few whose teachings tend towards aloofness and ivory-towerism and who, at worst, may be lost in a spiritual or theological *cul-de-sac*. But in any case, exceptions should not be taken as the rule.

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7. *The Dhammapada*, O. U. P. 1936, pp. 153-154.

While thus it is admitted that there is a danger of isolationism even in mysticism, we cannot accept the generalisation that mysticism is another name for the state of being stuck in a spiritual bottleneck. We also know that there are such yearning souls as are stranded midway in their paths with all further progress blocked. In such a case all semblance of realisation cannot but be illusory. The opening of the *prajñā*-eye, as the Buddha calls it, is not the signal for the realised soul's experience of the dissolution of the *saṁsāra* but the fullest comprehension of it in the way of purity. Taking up the ontological speculations of the two main schools of Buddhism in this light, we find that there is a full consciousness and realisation of the danger of being deflected towards an isolationistic position, and also a serious effort towards overcoming it. For example, the goal of emancipation of the Hīnayāna school is improved upon and rendered self-sufficient by the Mahāyāna school, which holds the Hīnayāna ideal only as prelude to its own ideal.

So it is that the destruction of the afflictions (*kleśa*) born of our attachment to this unreal and inane world of earthly existence, *i.e.*, success in overcoming all affectional hindrances (*kleśāvaraṇa*), must be followed by the destruction of all obstacles originating from our intellect and mind (*jñeyāvaraṇa*). It is only thus that the Perfection may be realised. There is a note of isolationism even in this and in what is thus said about intuitional wisdom (*prajñā*). Wisdom, it is said, which dispels the darkness of subjective clouds, may be great; but the highest Wisdom is that which

removes the sense of the reality of an objective world itself.

Coming down to the other philosophical schools, we find that the Tantras declare that the ideal state of *kaivalya*, as pictured in systems like Sāṁkhya — which follows a perfect detachment from Nature (*prakṛti*)— is no more than a state of magnificient isolation, in which the self is unable to forge any unity with the Supreme Self and with the other realised selves. It is further pointed out that detachment from both *māyā* and *mahāmāyā* is possible, but the danger of isolationism is not eliminated until the Divine Power Itself comes down to the rescue of the soul concerned. The mediaeval saints, too, repeatedly affirm that the risk of such isolation persists even when the *yogin* has transcended the limits of the Cosmic Mind (*brahmāṇḍī-manaḥ*) and is endowed with innumerable powers. The soul, unless raised aloft directly by the Divine Power, can never be able to cross over to the other side of the great wilderness of *mahāśūnya*, where, without the blessings and Grace of the Supreme Being, the soul is left stranded and helpless for indefinite aeons.

We have given above an idea of the pitfalls in the mystic path. But any despair on this score is unfounded. The mystic's unswerving pursuit of the highest goal of life is by itself an antidote to all unhelpful and discouraging circumstances. The Tantras point out that even lost souls are not lost for ever, but will re-appear on revival after the Cosmic Night and get a fresh chance of entering into the Divine Life. The great saints of the world have also affirmed this, and in modern times,

the Theosophists put their faith in it. The blessings and splendours of the Divine Consciousness are always open to all, though for valid reasons that do not need any recapitulation, the privilege is enjoyed only by a rare few.

The *kaivalya,* spoken of in Sāṁkhya and other *śāstras* is, for this very reason, deemed only an intermediate stage. Therefore the conception of *kaivalya* has been criticised by many philosophers. It is true, as the critics point out, that *kaivalya* represents, in a sense, a high degree of purity of the soul, which is freed from the shackles of Nature (*prakṛti*). But it must be understood that in the eye of the Tāntrika, *prakṛti* represents the lowest form of Matter, so that the purity consequent upon the soul's freedom from *prakṛti* can at best be relative. *Māyā* and *mahāmāyā*, as already observed, are the two higher states of Matter. Hence even *kaivalya* is of three progressive kinds, as indicating freedom from *prakṛti*, *māyā*, and *mahāmāyā*. Among these three, what we feel is that the last alone is fit to be described as *kaivalya* proper. But the inherent lacuna in *kaivalya* persists even in its purest form, for even this condition cannot be called absorption in the Divine in any true sense. It represents only the achievement of the greatest purity of the individual self, but the point is that until the light of the Divine touches and begins to convert the individual self into Divine Consciousness, the mystic cannot be said to have realised his life's ambition.

The conception of *kaivalya*, thus, has justifiably been criticised, and the critics have basically founded their

critiques on the points mentioned above. We may point out some of these critics and their criticisms. The *Pāśupatas*, for exasmple, regard *sātmaka mokṣa* or *par-maiśvarya*, which may be interpreted to mean not merely the cessation of pain but the realisation of Supreme Power (attainable through *yoga* by a communion between *ātman* and *Īśvara* through the medium of *citta*), as superior to *kaivalya*, which is *nairātmaka* and is only negative in conception, being freedom from sorrow and misery. The *Śaivas* (belonging both to the monistic and the dualistic schools), the *Śāktas*, and even the *Vaiṣṇavas* are not likewise favourably disposed towards the *beau ideal* of *kaivalya* in Sāṁkhya and Pātañjala-yoga. In the Pāñcarātra texts the criticism tends to be even bantering and satirical. In them, for instance, a soul in the state of *kaivalya* is likened to a queen separated from her beloved husband and living a life of great luxury, even though in exile, and without ever having the hope of even a distant vision of the Beloved. To the saints of medieval India, this state appears in no brighter light either. They look upon these and similar other souls as so many prisoners locked up in the Great Void (*mahāśūnya*) beyond the Cosmos, and unable to reach the Kingdom of the Divine in the immediate future. All their glory — if it can be called glory — is, as it appears, the self-extinction of the individual in the Universal.

In the domain of space and time, the modern ego-intoxicated man moves both horizontally and vertically. But he refuses, or is unable, to see that there is a higher world which transcends both space and time. True dynamism is that which is the result of man's move-

ment and progress in his inner world, in which again, the movement is, as we have already said, twofold—horizontally, when man realises his own being and also the being in others, and vertically when he is able to be liberated from his being and be merged in the Supreme. Movements in outer life, on the other hand, can never be but the movement along the circumference of a narrow circle. In this movement, all progress is illusory, since, as the poet has said,

> We dance in a ring and suppose
> The secret lives in the middle and knows.

In a state like this, one's position is on flat land, from where nothing higher can be visualized and aimed at, and where owing to myopic vision, everything happening in the other really dynamic world, the inner world, appears to be lacking all movement. How grievously wrong the people of the world are, may thus be seen in their looking askance at mysticism and calling it an inactive and useless pursuit. To sum up our points, we again affirm that a mystic is wrongly called inactive. Just as his silence is more eloquent than words (*gurostu maunaṁ vyākhyānam*) so his stillness is dynamic. His Integral Action (*kṛtsna-karma*) is really a Vision of Motion in Rest and of Rest in Motion. The external contradiction of the opposite moments vanishes for him forever, for in the Absolute all contradictions and contrarieties are resolved in ineffable bliss and in peace that passes comprehension.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

Quotations in Devanāgarī Script

For the facility of correct reference, the Saṁskrit and vernacular quotations transliterated in Roman script throughout the book have been collected here and rendered in Devanāgarī script according to chapter.

INTRODUCTION

P. 18 प्रवुद्धयमानरूपासंवित् यदा प्रश्नं निर्भूतावभासमानपरमार्थ-स्वरुपं करोति, तदा प्रबुद्धावस्थाप्रतिपत्तौ सैव पूर्णरूपा भैरवदेवतात्मिका प्रतिवचनदात्री सम्पद्यते ।

—परात्रिंशिका, लघुवृत्ति, p. 3

P. 18 योगिनामपि सर्वेषां मद्गतेनान्तरात्मना ।
श्रद्धावान् भजते यो मां स मे युक्ततमो मतः ॥

—गीता, VI. 47

P. 19 एकैवाहं जगत्यत्र द्वितीया का ममापरा ।

—दुर्गासप्तशती

P. 21 परं ज्योतिरुपसम्पद्य स्वेन रूपेणाभिनिष्पद्यते ।

—छान्दोग्य उपनिषत्, VIII. xii. 3

P. 22 सत्यपि भेदापगमे नाथ तवैवाहं न मामकीनस्त्वम् ।

—षट्पदी, 3

P. 27 ऊर्ध्वमुष्टिरधोदृष्टिरूर्ध्वं भेदोप्यधः शिरः ।
धारायन्त्र विधानेन जीवन्मुक्तो भविष्यति ।।

—अमनस्क

Chapter II

P. 68 उद्योगमयमालस्यं प्रकाशैकात्मकं तमः ।
अशून्यं शून्यकल्पं च तत्त्वं किमपि शाम्भवम् ।।

—संविदुल्लास तंत्र, महार्थमञ्जरी-परिमल p. 104

P. 69 प्रपञ्चोत्तीर्णरूपाय नमस्ते विश्वमूर्तये ।
सदानन्दप्रकाशाय स्वात्मनेऽनन्तशक्तये ।।
त्वं त्वमेवाहमेवाहं त्वमेवासि न चास्म्यहम् ।
अहं त्वमित्युभौ न स्तो यत्र तस्मै नमो नमः ।।
अन्तर्देहे मया नित्यं त्वमात्मा च गवेषितः ।
न दृष्टस्त्वं न चैवात्मा यच्च दृष्टं त्वमेव तत् ।।
भवद्भक्तस्य सञ्जातभवद्रूपस्य मेऽधुना ।
त्वमात्मरूपं संप्रेक्ष्य तुभ्यं मह्यं नमो नमः ।।

—अभिनवगुप्त

P. 70 अहं त्वं त्वमहं चेति भिन्नता नावयोः क्वचित् ।
अलं भेदानुकथया त्वद्भक्तिरसचर्वणात् ।।
त्वत्स्वरूपे जृम्भमाणे त्वं चाहं चाखिलं जगत् ।
जाते तस्य तिरोधाने न त्वं नाहं न वै जगत् ।।

—अभिनवगुप्त

P. 71 हद्द चलइ सो मानव वेहद्द चलइ सो साध ।
हद्द बेहद्द दोउ तजइ ताकइ मत अगाध ।।

—कबीर

P. 72 अद्वैतं केचिदिच्छन्ति द्वैतमिच्छन्ति चापरे ।
समं तत्त्वं न विन्दन्ति द्वैताद्वैतविवर्जितम् ।।

—अवधूतगीता, I. 36

P. 72 आत्मैव केवलं सर्वं भेदाभेदो न विद्यते ।
अस्ति नास्ति कथं ब्रुयात् विस्मयः प्रतिभाति मे ।।

—अवधूतगीता, I. 9

P. 72 आदिमध्यान्तमुक्तोऽहं न बद्धोऽहं कदाचन ।
स्वभावनिर्मलः शुद्ध इति मे निश्चिता मतिः ।।

—अवधूतगीता, I. 44

P. 73 निरालम्बमशून्यं च शून्यं व्योमादिपञ्चकम् ।
न षण्डो न पुमान्न स्त्री न बोध नैव कल्पना ।।
सानन्दो वा निरानन्दमात्मनं मन्यसे कथम् ।

—अवधूतगीता, I. 46, 47

P. 73 न बद्धो नैव मुक्तोऽहं न चाहं ब्रह्मणः पृथक् ।
न कर्ता न च भोक्ताऽहं व्याप्य-व्यापकवर्जितः ।।
प्रकृतिं पुरुषं तद्वदभिन्नं प्रतिभाति मे ।
न गुरोर्नोपदेशश्च न चोपाधिर्न च क्रिया ।
विदेहं गगनं विद्धि विशुद्धोऽहं स्वभावतः ।।

—अवधूतगीता, I. 50, 51, 54

P. 74 न सन् न चासन् न तथा न चान्यथा ।
न जायते व्येति न चावहीयते ।
न वर्धते नापि विशुद्धचते पुनः ।
विशुद्धचते तत् परमार्थ-लक्षणम् ॥

—असंग

P. 75 अनिरोधम्, अनुत्पादम्, अनुच्छेदम्, अशाश्वतम् ।
अनेकार्थम्, अनानार्थम्, अनागमम्, अनिर्गमम् ।
न सन् नासन् न सद्-असन् न चाप्यनुभयात्मकम् ।
चतुष्कोटि - विनिर्मुक्तं तत्त्वं माध्यमिका विदुः ॥

—माध्यमिक-कारिका

P. 80 सर्वज्ञातृत्वं सर्वात्मनां गुणानां शान्तोदिताव्यपदेश्यधर्मत्वेन व्यवस्थितानामक्रमोपारूढं विवेकजं ज्ञानमित्यर्थः । इत्येषा विशोका नाम सिद्धिः यां प्राप्य योगी सर्वज्ञः क्षीणक्लेश-बन्धनो वशी विहरति ।

—योगसूत्र-भाष्य, III. 49

P. 80-82 यथादर्शे तथात्मनि, यथा स्वप्ने तथा पितृलोके ।
यथाप्सु परीव ददृशे, तथा गन्धर्वलोके छाया-
तपयोरिव ब्रह्मलोके ॥

—कठ उपनिषत्, II. iii. 5

P. 84 ततः प्रातिभश्रावणवेदनाऽऽदर्शाऽऽस्वादवार्ता जायन्ते

—योगसूत्र, III. 36

Chapter III

P. 86 सत्त्वोद्रेकादखण्डस्वप्रकाशानन्दचिन्मयः ।
वेद्यान्तरस्पर्शशून्योब्रह्मास्वादसहोदरः ॥

—साहित्यदर्पण, III. 2

Chapter IV

P. 91 नायमात्मा प्रवचनेन लभ्यो
न मेधया न बहुना श्रुतेन
यमेवैष वृणुते तेन लभ्यस्–
तस्यैष आत्मा विवृणुते तनूं स्वाम् ॥

—कठ उपनिषत्, 1. ii. 23

P. 93 आचार्यवान् पुरुषोवेद

—छान्दोग्य उपनिषत्, VI. xiv. 2

P. 95 त्रयी सांख्यं योगः पशुपतिमतं वैष्णवमिति ।
प्रभिन्ने प्रस्थाने परमिदमदः पथ्यमिति च ॥
रुचीनां वैचित्र्यादृजुकुटिलनानापथजुषाम् ।
नृणामेको गम्यस्त्वमसि पयसामर्णव इव ॥

—शंकराचार्य : शिवमहिम्नस्तोत्र, 7

P. 96 आरुह्य भूमिमधरामितराधिरोढुं शक्य ।

—संक्षेपशारीरक-सूत्र, II. 60

Chapter V

P. 102 कर्मणैव हि संसिद्धिमास्थिता जनकादयः ।

—गीता, III. 20

P. 103 कर्मण्यकर्म यः पश्येदकर्मणि च कर्म यः ।
स बुद्धिमान् मनुष्येषु स युक्तः कृत्स्नकर्मकृत् ।।
—गीता, IV. 18

P. 104 अयं तु परमो धर्मः यद् योगेनात्मदर्शनम् ।

P. 105 नास्ति योगसमं बलम् ।

P. 114 यां प्राप्य योगी सर्वज्ञः क्षीणक्लेश बन्धनो वशी विहरति ।
—योगसूत्र-भाष्य, III. 49

P. 116 अनाहतस्य शब्दस्य तस्य शब्दस्य योर्ध्वनिः ।।
ध्वनेरन्तर्गतं ज्योतिर्ज्योतिरन्तर्गतम् मनः ।।
तन्मनो विलयं याति तद्विष्णोः परमं पदम् ।।

Chapter VII

P. 131 प्रथमम्महतां सेवा, तद्दयापात्रता ततः ।
श्रद्धाऽथ तेषां धर्मेषु, ततो हरिगुणश्रुतिः ।।
ततो रत्यङ्कुरोत्पत्तिः, स्वरूपाधिगतिस्ततः ।
प्रेमवृद्धिः परानन्दे, तस्याथ स्फुरणं ततः ।।
भगवद्धर्मनिष्ठाऽतस्वस्मिंस्तद्गुणशालिता ।
प्रेम्णोऽथ परमा काष्ठेत्युदिता भक्तिभूमिकाः ।।
—भगवद्भक्तिरसायनम्, उल्लास I. 34-36

P. 132 श्रवणं कीर्तनं विष्णोः स्मरणं पादसेवनम् ।
अर्चनं वन्दनं दास्यं सख्यमात्मनिवेदनम् ।।
—श्रीमद्भागवत्, III. 5. 23

P. 137 या व्यापारवती रसान् रसयितुं दृष्टिः कवीनां न वा
दृष्टिर्या परमार्थवस्तुविषयोन्मेषा च वैपश्चिती ।

P. 138 ते द्वे अप्यवलम्ब्य विश्वमखिलं निर्वर्णयन्तो वयम्
श्रान्ता, नैव तु लब्धमब्धिशयन त्वद्भक्तितुल्यं सुखम् ।

—ध्वन्यालोक, III

P. 140 द्वैतं मोहाय बोधात् प्राक् प्राप्ते बोधे मनिषया ।
भक्त्यर्थं कल्पितं द्वैतमद्वैतादपि सुन्दरम् ॥

—बोधसार, XXXII, verse 42

P. 141 अहं कान्ता कान्तस्त्वमिति न तदानीं मतिरभून्–
मनोवृत्तिर्लुप्ता त्वमहमिति नौ धीरपि तथा ।
भवान् भर्त्ता भार्याहमिति यदिदानीं व्यवसिति–
स्तथाप्यस्मिन् प्राणः स्फुरति ननु चित्रं किमपरम् ॥

—चैतन्यचन्द्रोदय, Act VII. 428, 430

P. 142 पहिलहि राग नयन भङ्गे भेल ।
अनुदिन वाढ़ल अवधि ना गेल ॥
ना सो रमण, ना हम रमणी ।
दुँहु मन मनोभव पेषल जानि ॥

—चैतन्य चरितामृत

P. 143 स वै नैव रेमे, तस्मादेकाकी न रमते; स
द्वितीयम् ऐच्छत्; स हैतावान् आस यथा स्त्री–
पुमांसौ सम्परिष्वक्तौ; स इमम् एवात्मानं द्वेधा–
पातयत्, ततः पतिश्च पत्नी चाभवताम् ।

—बृहदारण्यक उपनिषत्, I. 4. 3

P. 145 रस आस्वादन लागि हैला दुइ मुर्त्ति ।
सेइ हेतु कृष्ण हय पुरुष प्रकृति ।।

—द्वीपकोज्ज्वल ग्रन्थ

P. 148 आनन्दाद्ध्येव खल्विमानि भूतानि जायन्ते

—तैत्तरीय उपनिषत्

P. 148 स एकाकी न अरमत, तदात्मानं द्विधा अकरोत्

Chapter VIII

P. 160 यत्र नासन्न सद्रूपो नाहं नाप्यनहंकृतिः ।
केवलं क्षीणमननमास्ते द्वैतैक्यनिर्गतः ।।
निर्ग्रन्थिः शान्तसन्देहो जीवनमुक्तो विभावनः ।

P. 161 अनिर्वाणोऽपि निर्वाणश्चित्रदीप इव स्थितः ।।
अन्तः शुन्यो बहिः शून्यः शून्यः कुम्भ इवाम्बरे ।
अन्तः पूर्णो बहिः पूर्णः पूर्णः कुम्भ इवार्णवे ।
किञ्चिदेवैष सम्पन्नस्त्वथ वैष न किञ्चन ।।

—योगवाशिष्ठ-रामायण, VI. a, 126, 66-69

P. 162 अगम्या वचसां शान्ता सा सीमा भवभूमिषु ।
नित्यमव्यपदेश्याऽपि कथंचिदुपदिश्यते ।।
मुक्तिरेषोच्यते राम ब्रह्मैतत्समुदाहृतम् ।
निर्वाणमेतत्कथितं पूर्णात्पूर्णतराकृतिः ।।

—योगवाशिष्ठ-रामायण, VI. a, 126, 71, 73; III. 9, 25

Chapter IX

P. 169 पथव्या एकरज्जेन सग्गस गमनेन वा
सब्बलोकाधिपच्चेन सोतापत्तिफलम् वरम् ।।

—धम्मपद, 178

Chapter X

P. 214 एवं त्यक्त्वा बहिर्वाचं त्यजेत् अन्तरमशेषतः ।
एष योगः समासेन प्रदीपः परमात्मनः ।।

—समाधि तन्त्र, 17

Chapter XI

P. 217 स्वदेहमरणिं कृत्वा प्रणवं चोऽत्तरारणिम् ।
ध्याननिर्मथनाभ्यासात् देवं पश्येन्निगूढ़गत् ।।

—श्वेताश्वतर उपनिषत्, 1.14

P. 220 स्फोटस्याभिन्नकालस्य ध्वनिकालानुपातिनः ।
ग्रहणोधिभेदेन वृत्तिभेदं प्रचक्षते ।।

—भर्तृहरि : वाक्यपदीय, 75

वर्णस्यग्रहणे हेतुः प्राकृतो ध्वनिरिष्यते ।
वृत्तिभेदे निमित्तत्वं वैकृतः प्रतिपद्यते ।।

—भर्तृहरि : वाक्यपदीय, 77

P. 220 अनादिनिधनं ब्रह्म शब्दस्तत्त्वं यदक्षरम् ।
विवर्ततेऽर्थभावेन प्रक्रिया जगतो यतः ।।

—भर्तृहरिः वाक्यपदीय, I. I

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Mrs. Sobharani Basu (b. 1920) is holding the Malaviya Chair as a Reader in Comparative Religion at the Centre of Advanced Study in Philosophy, Banaras Hindu University since 1964. She has been teaching Philosophy and Religion for the last twentyseven years. She has studied under such eminent scholars as Dr. S. Radhakrishnan and Mm. Pt. Gopinath Kaviraj in India and Prof. A. J. Arberry of Cambridge University and Prof. T. W. Thacker of Durham University in England. She took her M.A. in Philosophy from Calcutta University and in Saṁskrit from Banaras Hindu University and her D. Litt. in Philosophy from the Calcutta University in 1948 and Ph.D. in Arts, (Persian and Islamic Studies) from the University of Durham, England, in 1967.

She studied in the School of Oriental Studies in the University of Durham and was the first Spalding Research Fellow during 1953-55.

Widely travelled several times all over Europe she has participated in a number of International Conferences in Philosophy and Religion. During 1962-63 she was a Fulbright scholar and a Visiting Professor under the Asian Visiting Professor's Project sponsored by the State Department of U.S.A. and she delivered several lectures on Indian Philosophy and Religion in America.

Dr. Mrs. Basu presided over the Religion section of the All India Philosophical Congress at its Fortyfourth session held at Poona in 1970.

In 1974 Dr. Basu participated in the International conference held at Ceylon under the auspices of World Council of Churches, Geneva, on Multi-Lateral Dialogue. Dr. Mrs. Basu delivered the Stephanos Nirmalendu Ghosh Lectures in a series on Comparative Religion for the year 1972-73 in Calcutta University.

Dr.(Mrs.) Sobharani Basu has, in these Volumes, studied mysticism in all its conceivable aspects. In the First Volume she studies the nature of mystic experience, the respective role of Divine Grace and human *sādhanā* in the life of a mystic, degrees of grace (including initiation=*dīkṣā* by *guru*), different paths of *sādhanā*, viz., *yoga*, *jñāna*, and *bhakti*, different stages of spiritual progress and the role of a mystic in human society. There is rarely a study of mysticism so thorough and so scholarly. Dr. Basu is aware of the objections raised from different quarters against mysticism and she has met them all patiently, logically and with courage of conviction. She is also aware that unless she processes all religious concepts, particularly those involved in mysticism, through rigorous philosophical analysis, backed by arguments wherever necessary, what she writes will not be heeded by others, and she has done that with considerable success. Naturally, she has had to refer to the actual experiences of some mystics. She has chosen some twelve Indian mystics of modern times, one of whom is a Mahomedan and one a Christian. Her study of these twelve mystics is surprisingly scholarly and pleasantly penetrating. A whole Volume — the Second Volume of the work—is devoted to this detailed study.

Lest it be misunderstood that her work is mainly on Hinduism, she, particularly in the Third Volume, has made a thorough comparative study of the basic experiences in different great religions—to cite only a few important of them, different phases of mystic experience, *jīvanmukti* and individual redemption *vs* redemption of all. The First and the Third Volumes together make a nearly complete work on Comparative Religion—a comparative study not only of fundamental philosophical notions but also of esoteric-spiritual practice called *sādhanā*, and equally of symbolism in religion, and also of the impact of religion on the general social and moral life.

My only objection to the whole work is that she uses the word 'mysticism' to denote the entirety of the spiritual experience involved in religion. I believe that its proper meaning should be that much of spiritual experience which cannot be expressed in intelligible language. But, to her defence, she may say that her use of the word is not also entirely unconventional.

Decidedly, the whole work is scholarly and illuminating and, above all, a pleasant reading in spite of philosophical subtleties and unavoidable repetitions.

Santiniketan
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